

PC ZONE

100% GAMES

OCTOBER 1993
ISSUE 7
£3.95



FREE

**ESSENTIAL
TORNADO
KEYBOARD
OVERLAY!**



PC ZONE DISK **SINK OR SWIM**

1

5 PLAYABLE LEVELS

GO BEYOND LEMMINGS
WITH ZEPPELIN'S PUZZLER

CREATED
FOR ALL
KNOWN VIRUSES

BIO PC ZONE DISK
MENACE

COMPLETE GAME

APOGEE'S ORGY OF
DEATH & DESTRUCTION

2

PC ZONE DISK **MANGA MAYHEM!**

3

STUNNING
GALLERY
OF ANIME
GRAPHICS



CREATED
FOR ALL
KNOWN VIRUSES

VGA ONLY

FULL DISK INSTRUCTIONS P.12

MANGA

FUN WITH GIRLS AND GUNS

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**DRIVE
OFF
IN A
LOTUS
ESPRIT!!!**

UPGRADES
Are **you** being
ripped off?

Lands Of Lore

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW - CLASSIC GAME

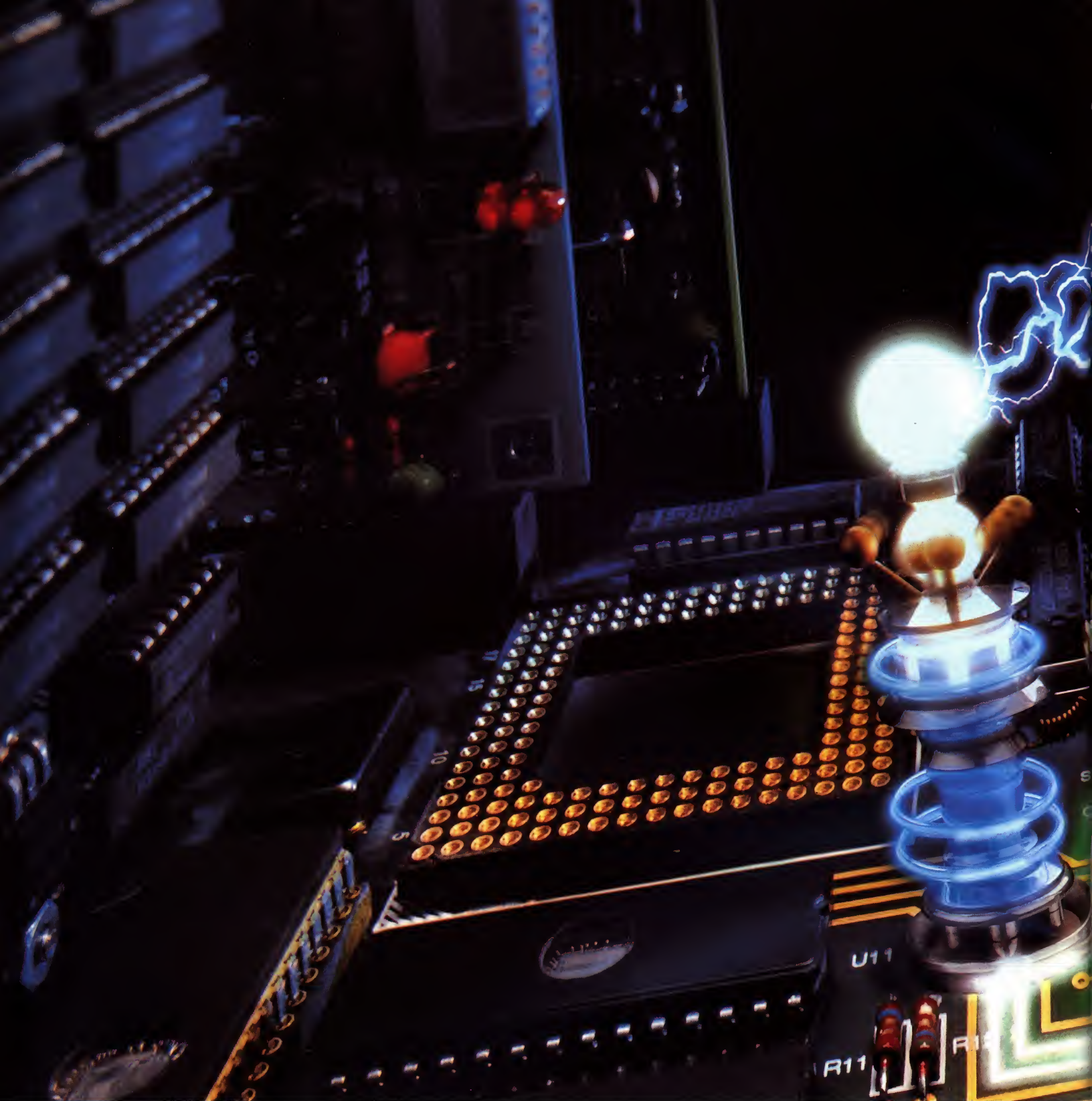
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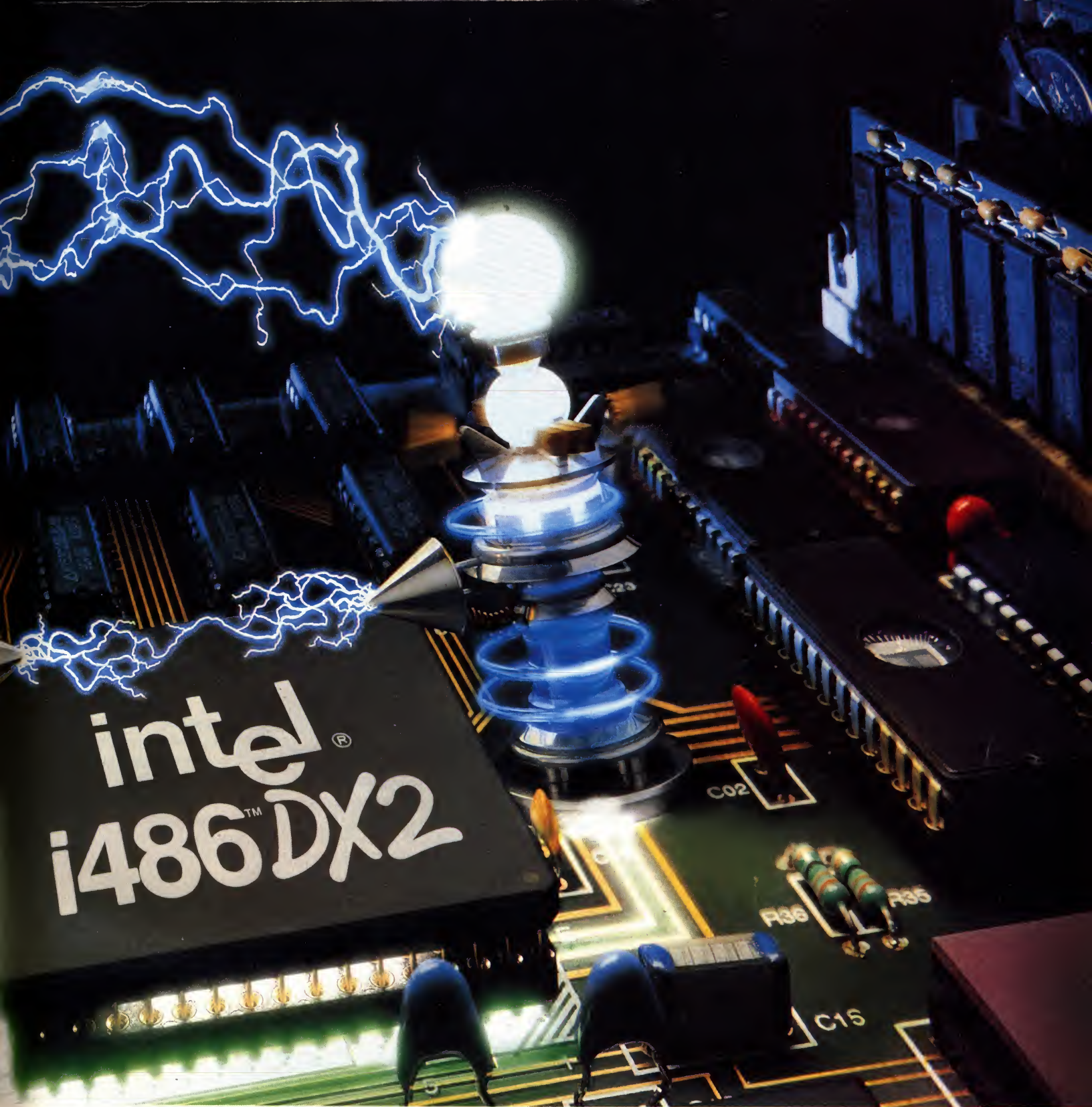


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BULLETIN BOARDS

A whole new world of games is just a modem away **PAGE 125**

UP-GRADES INVESTIGATED

Are you paying for a new game - or just a bigger box? **PAGE 44**

CD Q&A

The world of multimedia games explained and reviewed **PAGE 81**

dir.ectory

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JUST WHEN YOU thought there was nothing new that could be done with fantasy RPGs, Westwood Studios, the team behind the original *Eye of the Beholder*, comes up with something rather classic.

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CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT was an outstanding flight sim. Now Electronic Arts have used the same game engine in a land based conflict of atmosphere and action behind the lines in war torn Vietnam.

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FIRST THEY DISCOVERED America now they've discovered time travel. An absolutely insane Norse platform adventure.

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RE-FIGHT THE ENTIRE Second World War in one easy to use SSI package.

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PREPARE TO LOSE all your spare time to this sprawling strategy game from Omnitrend.

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INDULGE YOUR money-making fantasies in a game of medieval wheeling and dealing.

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OUTSTANDING SPORT action with all the thrills and big names of the National Hockey League.

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RPG AND STRATEGY combine in the latest outing from the Siege team.

75 Simon The Sorcerer

Adventuresoft, who brought you *Elvira* and *Waxworks* have set their sights on LucasArts and Sierra's crown with their own light hearted point and click adventure. Puzzles, humour, magic and a little green Swamping. What more could you ask for?

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PC ZONE

19 Bolsover St,
London W1P 7HJ.
Tel: 071 631 1433
Fax: 071 436 1321

Editor Paul Lakin; Art Editor Duncan C. Hemphill; Deputy Editor Laurence Scottford; Technical Editor Mark Burgess; Production Editor Kirsty Fortune; Contributors Andy Clarkson, Duncan MacDonald, David McCandless, Patrick McCarthy, Vici MacDonald (Design), Paul Presley, Anthony Soares, Andrew Wright; Publisher Tim Ponting; Subscriptions Hotline 0272 537711; Advertising Sales Executive Mike 'Wicked' Shepherd 071 631 1433; Group Advertising Manager Christine Reid; Advertising Production Manager Jenni Wood; Production Manager Mike Robinson; Origination Ebony 0579 46880; Printed in England by ET Heron; Newstrade Manager James Burnay; Distribution COMAG Magazine Marketing 0895 444055; Mail Order Manager Julia French; Publishing Director Bruce Sawford; Circulation Director Sean Farmer; Creative Director Jimmy Egerton; Non-Executive Director Dick Pountain; Financial Director Ian Leggatt; Managing Director Alistair Ramsay; Chairman Felix Dennis.

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DRIVE A LOTUS!

Win a day at the wheel of a £50,000 sports car.
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ANIME
Art or porn?
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PC

ZONE

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BLUEPRINTS

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THE TEAM BEHIND *Lure of the Temptress* is working on an even more ambitious project. Paul Presley is suitably impressed.

99 Starlord

Mike 'Midwinter' Singleton used to run a successful Play By Mail game. Now he's trying to turn it into an even more successful computer game. Paul Lakin keeps us posted.

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Ever wondered what would happen if *Ultima Underworld* met *Wolfenstein*? Mark Burgess did until he visited Raven Software and saw their latest project.

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With films you get the Directors Cut. With games you get Deluxe Editions, Data Disks and Sequels. But what are you getting for your money? A new game or just more of the same in a bigger box?

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As more games become available on CD Laurence Scotford takes a trawl through some of the latest releases to see where they differ from their small, square ancestors.

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Art or porn? The Japanese style of cartoon design and animation already dominates the console market. Now it's filtering through to computer games. Laurence Scotford and Paul Lakin don their serious journalist expressions before finding out what it's all about.

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Your chance to drive one of the world's best sports cars. But hurry, competition closes on 17 September.

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Complete solution to *Day of the Tentacle*, the concluding part of our *Shadow of the Comet* solution plus more games completely destroyed by the cyberpunk HackMasters™.

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Some not entirely relevant ramblings on the role of digestive biscuits in the Gulf War.

FREE!

**TORNADO
KEYBOARD
OVERLAY**

**PLUS
3 COVER
DISKS**



Meet the babes from Cobra Mission on **DISK 3**

1 Sink Or Swim

2 Bio Menace

3 Manga Mayhem

**DETAILS:
PAGE 12**

Bulletin

+ Catch up on the future with four pages of news from the occasionally weird and often wonderful world of PC games.

Gravis UltraSound

IMAGINE THE SCENE. You are flying a low level bombing mission deep in enemy territory. Suddenly an alert sounds, informing you that an enemy SAM site has a radar lock on you. Then there's a launch warning - you bank steeply across the missile's path and release chaff. It misses, but it is close enough for you to hear it whistling above your fuselage and off into the distance. As you approach your target, you hear bullets from ground forces ripping into the underside of your fuselage, but they can't prevent you from dropping your deadly cargo and listening to the explosions fading behind you as you speed off to safety. This may sound like a fantasy now, but it could soon be the sort of realistic sound you will hear while playing games, thanks to a revolutionary new system developed by Gravis. Focal Point 3D sound is a SurroundSound system that functions using existing hardware - the Gravis UltraSound card.

The Gravis UltraSound is one of the new breed of 16-bit CD quality sound cards. This card uses Wavetable Synthesis to create its sounds rather than the inferior FM synthesis used by most other cards. The card comes with a driver which will make the UltraSound emulate a Sound Blaster or Ad-Lib card, so it can even be used with games that lack dedicated UltraSound support.

In addition, the UltraSound is supplied with 265Kb on-board memory, upgradeable to 1Mb, a sampling capability, a MIDI connector which doubles as a speed-compensating joystick port, and a range of windows and DOS software.

The UltraSound MAX, including 3D sound software will be available now, and retails at £199inc

Further details

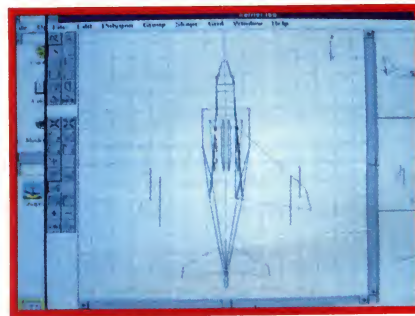
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Flight-Sim Toolkit

From the team behind the seriously popular *AV8B Harrier Assault* comes the chance to design your own flight sim. *Flight-Sim Toolkit* contains a Terrain Editor, Shape Designer, 3D Library, Cockpit Editor and a Dynamics section where you control movement and interaction. With the ability to create any flight simulator you want and the geographical data disks available for selected regions, you could soon be landing a 747 in your own back garden.

Publisher: Domark **Out:** November
Price: £49.99



MegaRace

Take fully rendered 3D graphics, add video and digitised animations, sprinkle in some 2D morphing and wrap the whole in a futuristic game of head-to-head driving combat. Cook for 30 minutes and voilà *MegaRace* on PC CD ROM

Publisher: Mindscape
Out: November **Price:** tba

WIN!

Win a Pinball Dreams T-shirt!

To help you look the part while playing their rather fine *Pinball Dreams*, 21st Century

Entertainment are offering a smart *Pinball Dreams* T-shirt to the first ten people to write in with the name of the Rock Opera from which Pinball Wizard is taken. Answers on a postcard to Pinball Wizardry, PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ. Competition closes 8 October.





Jurassic Art

+ We mentioned the Jurassic Art Windows graphics package in dispatches a couple of months back. Here's a screen shot to show you what it can do.

Publisher: Roderick Manhattan Group
Out: Now **Price:** £49.00



Freelancer

S till in its very early stages of design, *Freelancer* could be summarised as *Alien* meets *Wolfenstein* except of course we don't go for that pigeon-holing style of journalism round here.

Publisher: US Gold/Imagitec **Out:** First Quarter '94 **Price:** tba



Rally

VETERAN gamesplayers may well remember *Lombard Rally* a few years back. Now the team behind it have teamed up again with the RAC to create a game based on this year's four day rally. The game features digitised video graphics of the route and a range of rally cars, each with distinctive characteristics. And of course there's the chance to roll an expensive rally car, which is not to be sneezed at.

Publisher: Europress **Out:** November
Price: £34.99

Speed Racer

+ If you haven't heard of the *Speed Racer* cartoon characters then you very soon will. A run-away success in the late '60s when it was shown in the States and now showing on MTV, *Speed Racer* was a sort of Japanese *Wacky Races*, i.e. harder and weirder. Now Accolade is producing a game based on the series, complete with animated faces and digitised voices of the heroes, six different courses and an alarming assortment of autojacks, belt tires (sic) and buzz saws.

Publisher: Accolade **Out:** October **Price:** tba



Alien 3

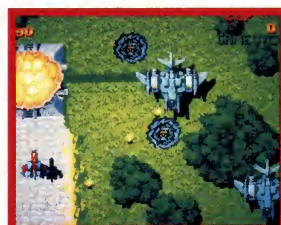
In space no-one can hear you scream, which is presumably why no one came to Ripley's rescue when she was suffering from her horrific haircut. Strangely none of the previous *Alien* outings have made it onto floppy. This gives the programmers an excuse to have Ripley (unarmed in the film) toolled up with hardware from *Alien* and *Aliens*; namely a pulse rifle, a flame-thrower and a gross of grenades. All good clean family entertainment.

Publisher: Virgin **Out:** November **Price:** tba

Raiden

+ As well as testing your reflexes on a faithful conversion of one of the better arcade shoot 'em-ups, this is also your chance to design your own shoot 'em-up. *Raiden* contains its own editor allowing you to select each sprite's frequency and attack pattern. What price a shoot 'em-up design kit eh?

Publisher: US Gold/Imagitec **Out:** October **Price:** tba



DISPATCHES

+++ IT MAY BE ONLY

September, but the football season is already underway and you can expect a flood of footie games. *Premiership Challenge* from Downsize Systems is a football management game in which players have over 30 characteristics, of which only a few are displayed. 'After all,' says Downsize's Mark Sear, 'Chris Waddle doesn't have Skill=18 out of 20 stamped on his forehead.' Another rather unusual feature of the game is that Downsize is working with the Rainforest Preservation Society to arrange for a tree to be planted in the tropical rain forest for each copy of the game sold.

+++ FANS OF THE AMERICAN

version of football will be salivating at the knowledge that MicroProse has signed the NFL licence. Their officially endorsed game should be making an appearance in October.

+++ FANS OF COMIC FANTASY

writer Terry Pratchett will have to wait rather longer for the first sight of *Discworld*. Teeny Weeny Games has acquired the much sought after licence to Pratchett's *Discworld* books and is developing a game for the PC and PC CD ROM (along with other formats). However the game won't see the light of day until next summer at the earliest. Also on the licence front Alternative are working on a game based on the characters from *The Beano* and *The Dandy* - look for a release in the spring of next year.

+++ ALREADY A BEST-SELLING

CD ROM for the Macintosh, sci-fi adventure *Space Warlock* is about to materialise on PC CD ROM. As one of a band of space pirates you get the chance to battle your way through a galaxy containing 125 megabytes of graphics, a point and click interface and an original music score.

+++ RELIEF IS AT HAND FOR

those of you who've rung up asking after *Nippon Sales* which we reviewed in issue four. The game's release was delayed when the company marketing it in the UK went broke. However the game has been bought up by The Software Business and is available now for £34.99.

+++ FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO'VE

been waiting patiently for *Patriot*, the latest offering from the team behind *Harpoon*, the wait is over. The game has just arrived in our office. Look out for the review next month.

Bulletin

Space Junk

Imagitec is one of the developers who seems to be making the most of the possibilities offered by CD ROM. *Space Junk* is a streetwise futuristic adventure and utilises Imagitec's IMAGINATION system where live action footage is shot of automation puppets (built by the people behind some of the *Spitting Image* puppets). This footage is then digitised and incorporated into the game, adding to that oh so special feel of being there.

Publisher: US Gold/Imagitec Out: First quarter '94 Price: tba



Logipad

+ More evidence for those who fear that their PC is becoming a large games console. The Logipad is the world's first games pad with closed micro switches. It also features independent, semi and auto fire on all six fire buttons. Bad news if you think the PC is a business machine. Good news if you honed your game playing skills on a SNES.

Publisher: Spectra Video Out: September Price: £18.99



VERSION WATCH

Following last month's grand listing of the latest versions of every program under the sun (well the ones with bug fixes/enhancements freely downloadable from bulletin boards or on disk from the publishers), *PC Zone* proudly presents an update that'll become a regular part of Bulletin. Keep yer eyes peeled for upgrades to games close to your heart.

There are a fair number of new fixes flying around the bulletin boards this month, including a *Pirates Gold!* update that corrects the 'evil person' in the city and special mission from the governor crashes, and enables the V1 switch as detailed in the README file that comes with the game. A new fix is due soon (codenamed version 3.0!).

The long awaited *Patriot* upgrade has arrived: version 1.1 hopefully makes the product work – the original being more bugged than a tropical rain forest. *Rules of Engagement 2* is now in its fifth

Keeping an eye on the latest free bug fixes and upgrades

fix, which seems to have caught just about all the original problems, including the irritating slow-downs and video card troubles. *Lands of Lore* – not even released in the UK as I write – has a fix that allows the game to support multiple sound cards. Maybe the release version over here will have it plumbed in to the game you buy. Impressions has fixed the mouse problem in *Air Bucks 1.2*. The 1.21 fix won't upgrade any version of *Air Bucks* prior to 1.2.

There are a couple of nice additions to the Sierra fold in the way of freeware: the company has released a program that will modify most Sierra games so that it will be possible to use an MT-32 or compatible synth via the MIDI port of a Sound Blaster or Sound Blaster Pro card. Also freely available is a file of sound bites from *Freddy Pharkas* in Windows .WAV format. So you too can be greeted by 'Score!' when you launch Windows.

| COMPANY | GAME | LATEST VERSION | MONTH OF RELEASE | DESCRIPTION |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Impressions QQP | Air Bucks | 1.21 | Aug-93 | Fixes mouse prob in 1.2 |
| | Conquered Kingdoms Scenario Disk | ? | Aug-93 | General fix |
| Westwood/Virgin | Lands of Lore | 2 | Aug-93 | Multiple soundcard fix v2 |
| Three-Sixty | Patriot | 1.1 | Jul-93 | General fix |
| MicroProse | Pirates Gold! | ? | Jul-93 | General fix |
| Omnitrend | Rules of Engagement 2 | 1.05 | Aug-93 | General fix |
| SSI | Unlimited Adventures | 1.2 | Aug-93 | General fix |

SSN-21 Seawolf

THE SEQUEL to acclaimed submarine sim 688 *Attack Sub* puts you in control of the still in design SSN 21 Seawolf Attack Sub which carries a frightening array of weaponry and defence systems. The game itself is not short on technical wizardry either, with over 100 sound samples including such diverse noises as a torpedo firing and a whale singing. The 40 different types of ship and 25 submarines each have their own distinctive sonar signature. The graphics are equally stunning with digitised explosions, a variety of different water effects and backgrounds which include some very moody thunder and lightning. (Though not when you're beneath the water you understand.)

Publisher: Electronic Arts Out: December Price: tba

Global Domination

+ Taking the concept of *Risk* a couple of stages further, *Global Domination* is a turn based strategy game which gives you the chance to actually get involved in the combat which can be against human opponents (via modem) or computer controlled megalomaniacs from history.

Publisher: Impressions Out: Late October Price: tba



Cyber-worlds

+ Fans of modem combat will want to get their hands on this compilation of games with that human option. *Global Effect*, *CyberChess* and *Air Warrior* are all playable against the computer. However, they can also all be played, via a modem, against human opposition; in the case of *Air Warrior* up to 40 people at one time.

Publisher: On-Line Out: Now Price: with modem £99.99, without modem £49.99

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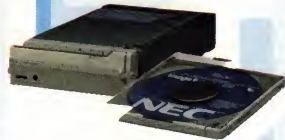
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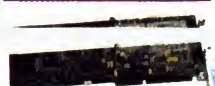
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Bulletin

Krusty's Fun House

+ Don't have a large milk producing bovine but one of the heroes of *The Simpsons* is about to crash onto the PC. Already a success on SNES and Mega Drive, *Krusty's Fun House* is a puzzle game involving the tasteful task of guiding rats to their doom in an array of weird killing machines operated by other members of the Simpson clan. All good fun though not a million miles removed from certain other rodent-based puzzle games.

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment **Out:** November **Price:** £30.99



Evolution: Lost In Time

From the developers of the highly successful *Humans* comes another light-hearted, but challenging, platform puzzler. This time you control a team of seven characters, each from a different period of history and each with his own unique power. With an incredible 80 levels (on five locations) plus 20 secret levels this looks set to be as dangerously addictive as its predecessor.

Publisher: US Gold/Imagitec **Released:** November **Price:** tba

Goal

+ You may feel that a great burden of expectation rests on the shoulders of Man Utd this season. Spare a thought for *Goal*, the new game from Dino Dini. As the programmer of the classic *Kick Off I and II*, Dino has something of a reputation to live up to and with *Sensible Soccer* challenging for the crown of greatest computer soccer game *Goal* is his chance to reassert himself. With more graphic appeal than its predecessors, a more intuitive play system and eight individual attributes for each player, *Goal* seems to be shaping up well. On the day, though, anything can happen - it's a funny old game etc.

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment **Out:** Late October **Price:** £35.99



DISPATCHES

+++ APOGEE HAS DEMANDED that all trainers, utilities and other add-ons for its games be removed from Bulletin Boards. In a statement originally posted in the Prodigy BBS, Joe Siegler, the Apogee Software On-Line Support Manager, said: 'In view of the serious impact third party editors and utilities have on Apogee's future business and reputation, we must respectfully request that the subject editors and utilities be immediately removed from distribution and advertising (which) includes electronic means such as Bulletin Boards and other On-Line Services.' The message has raised a storm, particularly as it also covers the multitude of additional levels of *Wolfenstein*. Most shareware games have an open structure to allow users to tinker with the various levels.

+++ UPGRADES ARE NOTHING new (there's a whole feature on them on p44). However Active is going a step further: owners of any electronic multimedia encyclopaedia will be able to trade it in together with a payment of £140.99 inc VAT and get their hands on Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia containing over 33,000 articles and costing £352.99 to the unupgradeable.

+++ THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR Educational Technology has announced a competition on the creative use of computer technology. The National Educational Multimedia Awards will offer 16 prizes under two main categories. Entrants may submit either a multimedia composition or a resource collection. Entry forms and more details from The NEMA Office, NCET, Sir William Lyons Road, Science Park, Coventry, CV4 7EZ.

+++ ANOTHER PIECE OF education-based news - a Computer & IT Convention is being held at Savio High School, Sefton, Merseyside on 1-2 October with displays from software and hardware companies. More details on 051 521 3088.

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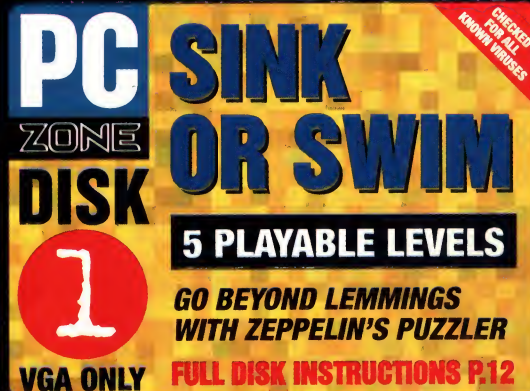
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COVER DISKS

It has often been said that our generosity knows no bounds, and that's never been truer than now because this month we've managed to squeeze a bonus disk onto the cover, making **PC Zone** the weightiest, best value for money PC games mag on the shelves. Not only do you get an extra disk for your money, but look what's on them: a five level playable demo of the latest puzzle game in the **Lemmings** mould; Apogee's new hit game – **Bio Menace**; two incredible utilities; an extra shareware game and a truly stunning slideshow of anime graphics. Don't ask us how we do it, we just don't know...



DISK ONE

SINK OR SWIM

THE SS LUCIFER, complete with a cargo of Dim Passengers, has been badly holed by an iceberg off the east coast of Greenland. Hearing the news at his small, isolated sea rescue station just north of Iceland, Kevin Codner springs into action and climbs into his Explorer class submersible, already equipped for a daring rescue mission. As the emergency lighting bathes the ship in an eerie red glow, Kevin knows he's got problems – in fact a whole shipload of them. Dim Passengers are invading the engine room, fleeing the numerous fires raging throughout the ship. Pistons in the engine room have gone haywire and pipes have burst, sending torrents of scalding

steam everywhere, and... oh yes, there's the small matter of 70,000 gallons of ice cold sea water pouring into the hull faster than the pumps can handle. Of course Kevin could run for it but he isn't that sort of hero: he'll have to enter each area of the ship, get the passengers through the escape hatch and then find an escape route of his own.

To play type: S0S

How to play

On each level, you must find a way to get the Dim Passengers to safety before they come to any harm, then you must find a way off the level yourself.

Some levels will gradually fill with water. You have a limited air supply which allows you to spend only a small amount of time underwater.

To get past some bulkheads, you will need to use bombs. These have fuses of variable length controlled by the fire button: the longer you hold it down, the longer you will have before the bomb explodes.

If any of the Dim Passengers begins to drown, there are two ways Kevin can rescue them. Either he can drop them a jetpack, if there is one on that level, or he can inflate the life raft to get them onto dry land.

Kevin Codner has periods of invincibility which are indicated by stars circling his body. Passwords are given at the end of every level. Press SPACE on the opening screen if you wish to enter a password.

Controls

Left and Right: Walk in that direction

Left and Right with Fire: Jump in that direction

Up: Climb up a ladder or hang from pipes and ironwork

Down: Climb down ladders or drop from pipes and ironwork

Down and Fire: Drop bombs, collect jetpacks, control special devices.

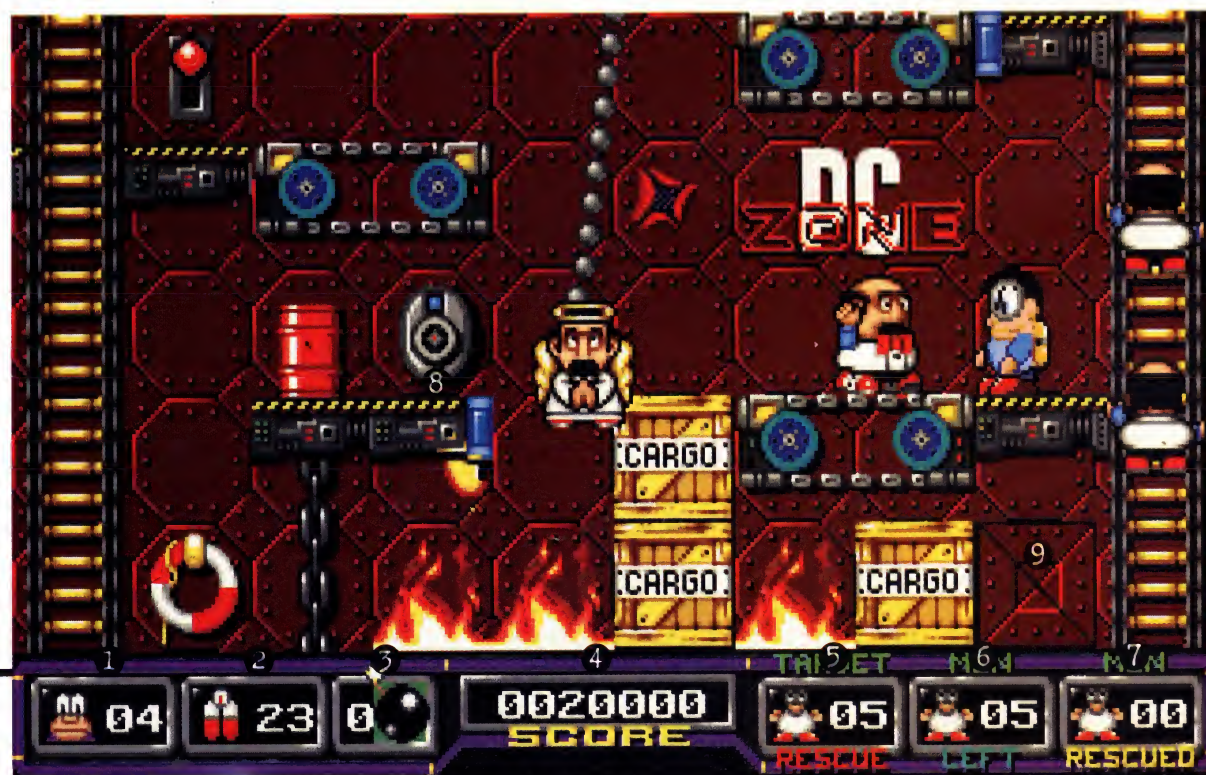
Fire: activate switch

Space: Drop life raft (can only be used once on each level)

ESC: lose a life and restart level

P: Pause

Q: Quit





At last – a game with balls! BipBop II is one of the best variants on Breakout to emerge recently. It's simple, but very addictive, so bite the bullet and get that big red boink bouncing, or your number will be up...

BIPBOP II

IN THIS Breakout-style game, your objective is to remove all 'boinks' from the screen. A boink is a little box with a Roman numeral in it. You'll note that when you bounce your ball against a boink, its value decreases. This, in a nutshell, is the whole idea. Knock a boink down to zero, and it will disappear. When all of the boinks on a level are eradicated you'll advance to the next board. There are 20 in all.

You control the game by manipulating your paddle, which you'll find at the bottom of the screen. Mouse users, simply trundle your rodent left and right. Keyboard aficionados, use the ALT and CTRL keys. ALT goes left, and, fortunately, CTRL shifts the paddle to the right. Simple, eh? But, that's not all.

The paddle is a fascinating instrument indeed, for it possesses the power to ejaculate bullets of approximately three times its own mass. To test your firepower, press a mouse button, or the space bar on the keyboard. Get good with these bullets – you have about a kazillion of them, and you'll need them on occasion. The ball that you bat around in hopes of nailing a boink or two will bounce off of these bullets, which makes them most useful for tricks and such.

Boinks aren't the only things populating the levels, by the way. You'll also find:

Goblins: Mean little buggers who, when touched, boost every boink on the level by one. You'll discover this infuriating habit soon enough.

One-ups: Free lives, which you will certainly be thirsting for when you play the game.

Shocks: Look like exclamation points, and we're not even sure what they do.

If you make it past all of these beasties, you might just get to the end of the game, and learn exactly why you've been playing. (It's a zen moment; don't miss it.)



- 1 Lives remaining
- 2 Air supply
- 3 Bomb fuse indicator
- 4 Score
- 5 Number of passengers to rescue
- 6 Number of passengers remaining
- 7 Number of passengers saved
- 8 Dim Passengers' escape hatch
- 9 Kevin Codner's escape hatch



DISK TWO

BIO MENACE

FROM APOGEE, the people who brought you *Duke Nukem* and *Wolfenstein 3D*, comes their latest platform adventure, *Bio Menace*. The evil scientist Dr Mangle has used his skill in genetic engineering to create super intelligent and malign creatures. He has unleashed his mutated creations on Metro City and they have layed waste to everything and anything they came across.

The CIA have sent special agent Snake Logan on a reconnaissance flight over the city, but his plane is shot down. The only hope for the world is the possibility that Snake Logan can destroy the creatures and escape from Metro City with his moustache intact.

To play type: **BMENACE1**



Don't shoot the hostage! Snake is a man with a moustache and a mission. Can he stop the world from being slimed in 16 colours? Probably not.

How to play

Guide Snake through each level, shooting or avoiding the creatures. Collect items for power ups, extra weapons and

COVER DISKS

essential actions like opening doors. As you progress, you will be given clues as to what to do next.

Controls

Left and Right: Make Snake run left and right
Up: open a door/enter a door or window/retrieve an object
CTRL (joystick button 1): Jump
Up and ALT (up and joystick button 2): Throw Grenade
ALT (joystick button 2): Fire Weapon
PG UP and PG DN: Look up and down

SLOWER

SLOWER IS A fast system slowdown utility by Kenneth Kline. Once loaded, this program will remain in memory, and continue working until you restart your machine. It effectively slows your system down, as well as printing a clock in one corner of the screen, and allows such things as playing older games on newer, faster systems and giving you an added edge over some of the faster-paced arcade-style games.

To use the program, at the DOS prompt type: SLOWER and press RETURN. You will be prompted for a slowdown factor from 0 to 32767. Higher values entered make the machine slower while entering 0 will have very little effect on the system speed (if you just want the clock in the upper left corner, enter 0). Entering a negative value will abort the installation of the program in memory.

Note: The clock may disappear while running some programs. This is normal. The clock will usually re-appear after the program has returned to DOS.

ZAP

ZAP IS A saved game enhancer by Charlie McCollum. Here's a list of the games that will work with ZAP, along with what you get when you zap 'em:

Catacomb Abyss: 99 of each item, 100% health
Commander Keen 1: 30,000 lives, 30,000 ammo, pogo stick
Commander Keen 4: 30,000 lives, 30,000 ammo
Cosmo: 5 health, 9 bombs
Crystal Caves: 30,000 ammo
Keen Dreams: 999 lives, 999 flowers, 999 bombs, 999 keys
Major Stryker: Best weapon, shields, 99 bombs, 9 ships
Secret Agent: 99 ammo, gun power-ups
SimCity: 2,000,000,000 dollars
Street Rods 1: 60,000 dollars
Street Rods 2: 60,000 dollars
Wolfenstein 3D: 99 lives, 99 ammo, 100% health, the best gun, both keys

To use this program, go to the directory which has the save games you would like to zap. Type: ZAP *.* and hit ENTER. It will automatically figure out which files in the directory are save games, which game they are from, and will zap them for you. If you would like to zap only one file, then type ZAP and the name of the file, and hit enter. For example:

ZAP SAVED1.CK1

Or you can also include a directory name, such as
 ZAP C:\KEEN*.* or ZAP C:\KEEN\SAVED1.CK1.

WARNING: When you use this program on saved games from *Wolfenstein 3D*, it will only work on saved games from *Wolfenstein* version 1.0. If you try to use it with *Wolfenstein* version 1.1 or above, it will result in corrupted save games.

You are strongly advised to make backups of your saved game before using this program.

**PC
ZONE
DISK
3**

**MANGA
MAYHEM!**
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FOR ALL
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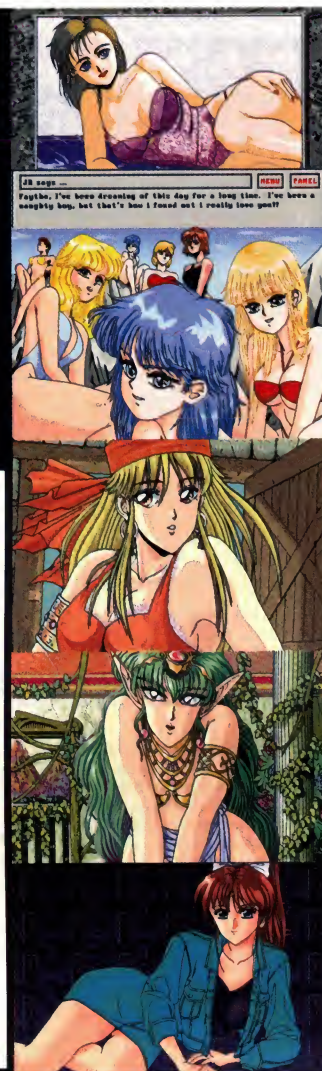
BONUS DISK

MANGA MAYHEM

AS A SPECIAL FREE tie-in with our feature on anime (see page 70), we've compiled a slideshow of artwork from the anime games published by American company Megatech. There are shots from three games in the slideshow: *Cobra Mission*, *Metal & Lace: The Battle of the RoboBabes* and *Dragon Knight III*.

To view the slideshow, type: ANIME

Press any key to bring up the next slide or caption. You can press esc at the title screen, or whenever a caption is displayed, if you wish to exit the program.



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If, having called the Helpline, you are advised that the disk needs returning, please place it in a padded envelope with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the replacement disk, and send it to **PC Zone Issue 5, Disk Replacements, TIB PLC, TIB House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, BD4 7BH**. Please do not return faulty disks to *PC Zone*. We do not stock replacement disks, and will be unable to respond. (Besides we'll probably lose your letter in the mess on Paul's desk.)

Why is anime taking over the world? Find out for yourself by viewing this stunning slideshow of art from Megatech's marvelous manga masterpieces.



"...Seal Team is looking very impressive...unlike anything I've previously seen."

PC Review July 1993



VIRTUAL VIETNAM

Lock and Load!

The VC have gone to ground and there's only one team to flush them out.

The SEAL Team.

Cutting edge flight-sim technology puts you at the heart of the action, right behind enemy lines. From the soldier's actual perspective the Mekong Delta is brought to terrifying life – with realism guaranteed!

Crawl through undergrowth, wade chest-high through swamps, and develop the keen SEAL team sense that lets you know when to get your butt out of the jungle.

SEAL Team has over 75 missions based on actual combat reports. And thanks to the developer's collaboration with the Navy SEALs Museum, each one is accurate to the last bullet count.

Carry out ambushes, demolitions and rescues; destroy arms caches and call up air, gunboat and gunship strikes.

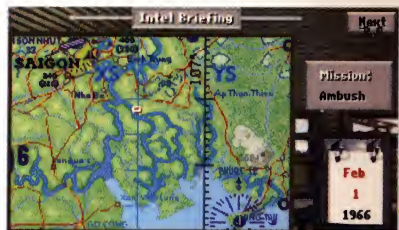
At your disposal – an awesome arsenal of over 35 weapons including assault rifles, sub-machine guns and rocket launchers. Believe me, you'll need them.

SEAL Team brings the VC so close, they practically smell your fear.

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In addition to the regular readers' verdicts, we will be running regular Classic Game features, looking back at products that have been on sale for a while but which have stood the test of time. Our research for these features will be drawn from your opinions and we'll be conducting regular polls to find out what you think.

Finally, Club PC members who live near leading software houses may well find themselves invited to visit their premises, be given sneak previews and give their personal verdicts on top secret games projects under development.

No other magazine offers so much to its readers. But if you don't want to be a part of the Club – no problem, you can still subscribe at the discounted rate. Remember, even if you're new to gaming, we still want to hear what you have to say. Club PC is open to all, no matter what your experience.

THIS MONTH'S PANEL

Turn to page 30 and find out what James Bourne, Daniel Emery and Gareth Ramsey had to say about *Seal Team*.

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simulation. Forget the skin deep appeal of *Links 386 Pro* – this is the one that'll keep you up on Friday night after coming home from the pub with a curry and posse in tow. For the connoisseur of sports simulations.



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RRP £35.75 • This classic strategy game is Sid Meier's prequel to *Civilization*, voted unanimously by the *PC Zone*

editorial team as one of the most addictive build 'em-ups ever written. Construct a railroad empire and smoke large cigars, not necessarily in that order.



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

RRP £44.99 • Possibly the greatest bombing sim of all time! Take your personalised plane and crew on a tour of

European landmarks. This stunning game has elements that'll appeal to any player: turret gunner, bombardier, navigator: you control them all.



SPECIAL FORCES

RRP £44.99 • Sequel to the classic *Airborne Ranger*, *Special Forces* puts you in command of an elite team of crack troops. This difficult and

unique squad-level combat game is a combination of action and strategy that requires quick thinking and careful planning.

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Blueprint

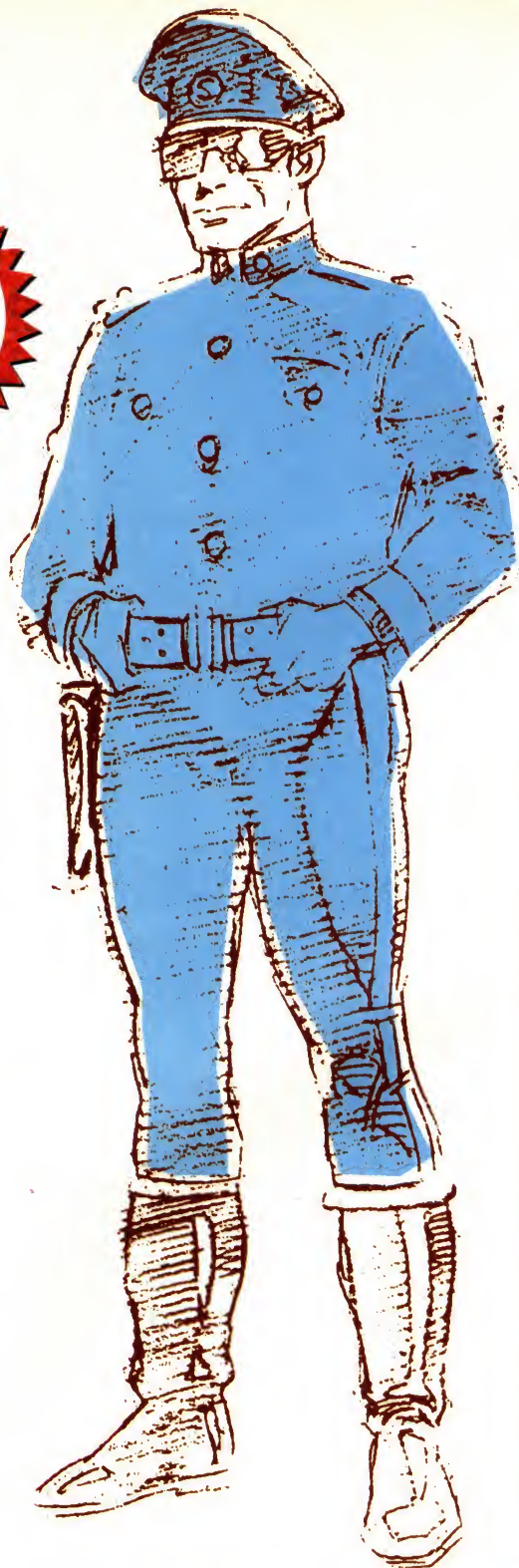
Beneath A Steel Sky

PUBLISHER: Virgin

PRICE: £35.99

TELEPHONE: 081 960 2255

OUT: End November



The most innovative adventure system of last year is about to return. We sent **Paul Presley** to find out as much as he could about Revolution Software and Virtual Theatre. Then he wrote some things about them.

1

1992 was a good year for adventure games. We saw a sequel to the funniest adventure ever, *Monkey Island 2*, graphical splendour in the shape of *King's Quest VI*, accurate television folklore with *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* and possibly the best all-round adventure ever,

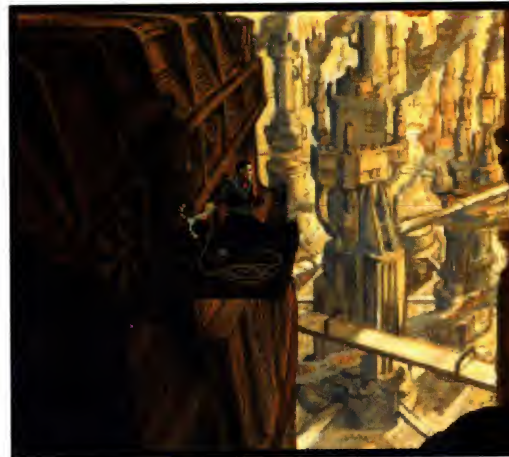
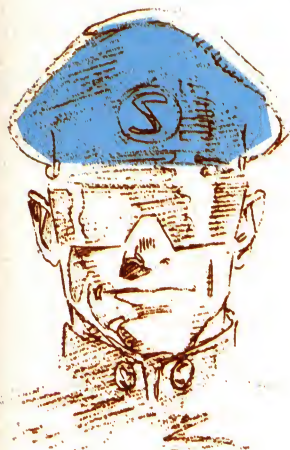
Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis. But amongst all these marvels, one other game was receiving its fair share of the applause. With a clever storyline, attractive presentation and a unique handling of characters and locations, Revolution Software's *Lure of the Temptress* turned many a head.

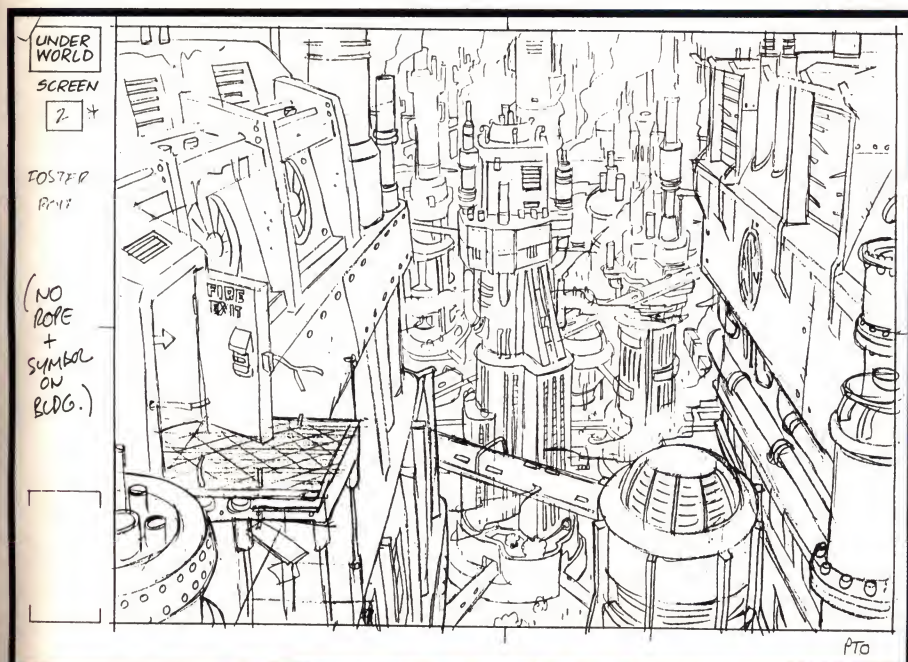
What made *Lure* so different from everything else was a clever little system called Virtual Theatre. Whereas in most adventure games everything revolves around the central character (i.e., whatever isn't on the screen doesn't exist until the character is due to interact with it), Virtual Theatre keeps every location, every character and every object in the game alive, regardless of what the player happens to be doing at the time. Say you talk to a blacksmith then leave his screen to go off and do something else. The blacksmith will continue to exist and will wander around the available locations – in *Lure's* case, a small village called Turnvale – doing as blacksmiths would most likely do in real life. Basically, the world in a Virtual Theatre game continues to exist whether the player decides to get involved or not.

How it all began

Charles Cecil is the head honcho at Revolution. He recalls how *Beneath a Steel Sky* was first created: 'While at Activision, I had met Dave Gibbons (British comic artist, best known for *Watchmen*). It seemed to me that, although he was relatively unknown in the UK, he was revered as a genius in France, Germany and the US. I considered that, thanks to his immense creative abilities, Dave could provide very valuable experience to our type of product.'

'In August 1991, we approached him and asked if he would help us with a new project that we were working on. Mirrorsoft agreed to commission the project, which we called *Underworld* (Origin had not produced a game of that name at this stage). With the demise of Mirrorsoft in December, the game had been put on the backburner until things were sorted out. ☛





BIRTH OF A SCREEN

Dave Gibbons' artwork may be excellent, but that doesn't always mean that it meets with the technical design specifications. Here we follow the path of one location, from original artwork to finished screen:

MONO ARTWORK

1. The ledge is too wide, since the player has to cling from the back of the door when it opens.
2. Since the character is to swing across the gap and smash through a window, Dave has to change the layout of the building on the right-hand side.
3. The player needs something to swing from so the security sign has to be moved.

COLOUR ARTWORK

1. The ledge has been shortened and the shape of the building has changed slightly to compensate for the new composition of this side of the picture.
2. The windows have been moved down and the whole building has been raised above the top of the screen.
3. The security sign has been enlarged and placed so that the player can swing from it into the window below.

SCREENSHOT

And here is the finished screen complete with hero in mid-swing. Note the addition of shadow and small animations to add to the atmosphere. Darkening the edges also brings the player's attention to the centre of the screen where all the action takes place. There's more to this drawing lark than meets the eye, you know!

'The world in a Virtual Theatre game continues to exist whether the player gets involved or not.'

THE ART OF ILLUSTRATING



The background graphics went through several stages before becoming completed computer screens. First, the designers agreed what would appear; Dave Gibbons then drew roughs of the screens, following those basic rules. Next, they evaluated the screens from a technical aspect and Dave then made the necessary changes and supplied revised screens. This process would continue until both Dave and Revolution were both happy that they had the best composition possible, while conforming to the restrictions.

The basic rules for drawing the background screens were:

- Where there is no sprite scaling, limit the Y-axis (vertical) movement. This is to avoid the illusion that the sprite is getting bigger and smaller, caused by the relative size of objects around it.
- Avoid having exits/entrances on the Y-axis. This is to avoid characters seemingly appearing from nowhere when they enter a screen. If necessary, build an alcove so that they can appear from a Y-axis exit, having turned into the X-axis.
- Avoid 'box within a box' types of screen layout. Make it interesting. Where appropriate, add darkened foreground objects for atmosphere.
- The autorouting system requires areas in which people pass to be at least two characters wide. Avoid narrow gaps where people are going to meet.
- Ensure continuity. The external view of a building must be reflected by the shape of the rooms inside that building.

It was decided that the actual inking should be completed by a third party, as usually happens with comics and cartoons. After much hunting around, Revolution approached Les Pace, one of the animators on Disney's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* He was given the final pencilled screen to colour, which was then taken and scanned on to an Apple Macintosh in 24-bit mode.

The scanner produced a very high-resolution image with a pallet of 25 million colours. This was then translated to a resolution of 200x320 with a palette of 256 colours – causing a severe loss of detail. With that came distortion, and so it was necessary for Revolution's artists to then spend several days 'touching up' a screen to maximise its quality within the technical constraints.

- 1 Limiting the vertical movement. These large gates prevent the main sprite from wandering towards the top of the screen, an act that would call on 'sprite scaling' – a feature that Revolution are keen to avoid where at all possible.
- 2 Avoiding exits on the Y-axis. Rather than have a 'black area' at the top of the screen which characters just appear from, the designers have to make any top or bottom entrance appear horizontal. Adding this tunnel solves the problem here.
- 3 Avoiding the 'box within a box'. The use of these bushes and leaves around the screen add to the atmosphere and make it seem more realistic.
- 4 Autorouting. The areas that allow character movement are all at least two characters wide to prevent 'character queuing', a problem from *Lure of the Temptress*.
- 5 Ensuring continuity. When you enter the building on the left, the rooms inside won't suddenly change shape. Everything inside will conform to fit the shape set here.





THE REVOLUTION COMI... SORRY, THE REVOLUTION 'GRAPHIC NOVEL'

With Dave Gibbons' talents to hand, it was only natural that Revolution would ask him to produce a comic strip to introduce the story. What you see here is some of the rough artwork for the booklet that accompanies the game.



PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386

Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk: 20Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Roland, Ad-Lib, Ad-Lib Gold.

(Above) If these cryogenic units work anything like my own freezer, everyone'll be defrosted within the hour.

(Above right) Even hairdryers look sinister in the future.

(Left) It may be the future, but even sinister and oppressive security forces have admin to file.

(Below left) One of the many strange locations to come from the mind of Dave Gibbons, Charles Cecil et al.

'In March 1992, we approached Virgin and asked them if they wanted to take *Underworld* as well as *Lure*. They accepted the project on the proviso that it was written using the Virtual Theatre II system, which is an enhanced version of Virtual Theatre. Dave Gibbons was commissioned to provide input into the design and draw the background screens.'

The design work for *Underworld* – or *Beneath a Steel Sky* as it had to be later named – started again in April 1992. Six months of design work was re-evaluated and the project was started over.

Problem solving

It had originally been planned that *Beneath a Steel Sky* would be written using the same system that drove *Lure of the Temptress*. However, a thorough analysis showed that there were several aspects of Virtual Theatre that could be improved. 'The main one,' explains Charles, 'was that there were too many boxes on-screen, which could become confusing, especially when there were multiple conversations taking place in a location. Eventually we decided that the system should be completely enhanced to overcome this, as well as other problems.'

It was found that there was only one possible way of interacting with many of the objects. For instance, interacting with a door would open it if it was closed, and close it if it was open; interacting with the bolt would lock it if it was unlocked, or unlock it if it was locked.

'In this way, the interaction with objects can be quick and painless,' says Charles. 'To ensure that this did not close down the scope of puzzles we increased the number of problems that require a second portable object. For example, to open the fire door in the first screen, the player needs to pull a bar from the guard-rail and use it to prise open the lock.'

American cousins

A few months ago, Charles was quoted as saying that Revolution would continue to develop almost all of their products for low-spec machines. Now it seems that even this last bastion of hope for 640K 286 owners is falling. 'We may even have to go to two Meg of memory to get all the animations in,' he sighs.

This does seem to be the only way he'll get his games to match the quality of his American counterparts – a task that Charles set himself when Virtual Theatre began. With *Lure of the Temptress*, his main goal was to get people to compare it favourably to *The Secret of Monkey Island*. This time he's looking for equally favourable comparisons to LucasArts' sequel.

As one of the few serious British adventure creators (at last count there were only two), valiantly defending our two shores against LucasArts, Sierra and Dynamix on one side, and Delphine, Infogrames and Coktel Vision on the other, Charles is keen for people to rate *Beneath a Steel Sky* above all those competitors' products. And thanks to the uniqueness of the Virtual Theatre system, that may just become the case. **[Z]**





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Lands of Lore

Playing area

This is where all happens. You can opt for a floating cursor, that is, a cursor that turns into a direction pointer when you touch the appropriate edge of the screen. It's a personal preference since old-fashioned buffs may want to use the direction box.



1 Compass

Not as essential as it used to be in the days when maps came as badly drawn, guaranteed-to-be-lost-in-five-minutes messes on the back of bank statements. It is useful, however, when you step on one of the frequent rotate and disorientate squares.



2 Magic atlas

A gift from God's bottom. This maps everywhere you go, everywhere you look and even – joy of joys – tells you where secret passages, hidden buttons and pits are. All in lovely colour co-ordinated detail.



3 Lantern

Not particularly useful outside, but a downright necessity in the subterranea. It needs constant refilling, or your bright glow in the dark dungeon surrounds could be plunged into alarming gloom.



4 Money

Keep a tight rein on the purse strings if you want to be wielding all the latest 'garb' and hardware.



5 Direction box

For the RPG traditionalists, ladies and gents, I give you the pointy directional box thing.



6 Character box

Gives you an idea of how your characters look (in my case, ugly and zitty) and of how well they're weathering the storm. Blood and grazes appear as blows are rained on their backs. The top icon forces a weapons attack; the lower icon is a magic attack.



7 Disk

Control saving and loading of game here.



8 Zzzz

Sends your loyal chums to night-night world, so they can recoup their health and spell points.

9 Inventory



Possibly the most annoying feature of *Lands of Lore* is the inventory strip. Although it's about 30 objects wide, it renders 'grouping' or 'collecting' similar items impractical. If you have, say, three daggers and a fourth one comes along, you have to shuffle all the objects along one so you can slot in the new knife. This means picking up each one and replacing it one step along.



Lore

Lo! For 'tis the Eternal RPger. Ye may know him by many names. He is Duna'Sklh in *Ultima Underworld*, Gars'Kaka Norg in *Eye of the Beholder III*, and Ak'Shel (son of Ak'Shal) in Virgin's new mega RPG *Lands Of Lore*. Ye may also ken him, in this epoch, as **Day'Id McCan-Dless** of *PC Zone*.



IF I HAD A time machine, I wouldn't just go back in time to kill Hitler – I'd kill J.R.R. Tolkien as well. He's the progenitor of all we play. You name them:

Betrayal At Krondor, Eye of the Beholder, Dungeon Master, Ultima Underworld, Advanced Orcs in Leather Shorts and Elves in Chiffon Jerkins Simulator – all owe a backhander to J.R.

Lord of the Rings was his troll-packed, elf-stacked, wizard-stuffed popularisation of Euro-myth. The basic story: lots of middle-aged men with beards and swords falleth with cloven head trying to gain possession of a magic ring, while a small hairy-toed 'halfling' pops it into a large, nearby volcano and destroys it. And did it sell? Did it capture the imagination of an entire sub-continent? Did it influence computer games as we know them?

Just a little bit, I think, as I sit here playing *Lands of Lore*, programmed and designed by WestWood Associates, the original team behind *Eye of the Beholders I & II* (but not *III*) and I'm thinking: 'It's all his fault.' All those trolls, and orcs, and elves – they're his fault, too. *D&D*, *AD&D*, *T&T*, RPG, NPC, HP, DEX, CON, STR, and EXP. Magic rings, bronzed warriors with low foreheads, Balrogs, wraiths, and huge worlds with large, green deciduous forests alongside volcanic mountain ranges.

And here I am trapped in the Urbish mines. Cabatta the Thomgog's still with me, but we're running low on both health points and

spell points. Constant attacks from Pentrogs and Cabal Warriors don't help, my lantern oil is running low and I can't find the way out!

Dissolve to flashback (in soft focus).

The story

All is not well in the Lands. In fact, things are pretty bad. There's a war on between the heavyweights of the *Lands of Lore* world: Witch Scotia (evil, cackling and warty) versus King Richard (good, proud and bearded).

King Rick's special move is the nonchalant thronal sitting position and the abrupt fist-slam to punctuate every sentence: 'I must destroy her now!' (slam); 'We must kill everyone!' (slam); 'Where are my moccasins (the burgundy leather ones)?' (slam).

Scotia, on the other hand, is like your favourite granny, but with an anaconda-rinse instead of the usual blue. Her secret weapon is a rather ace ruby ring – the Ruby of Truth to be exact – which she extracted from the Urbish Mines. She can (ab)use its special powers to change her shape; into a crow, or a beautiful woman or even an onion: whatever she likes. Once metamorphosed, she can infiltrate her enemies' stronghold, Castle Gladstone, and use the ring's power to stir the Dark Army to war.

Items



Sledge hammer

Smashes fragile walls and skulls.



Oil

Wet the lantern's palette and rusty cogs.



Swarm

Unleashes a hive of wasps at opponents.



Star

A lethal shuriken.



Ginseng

Relaxes and cures poisoned eco-adventurers.



Salve

A general heal potion.



Lock picks

Essential for cracking chests.

Scotia, hag and all-round testament to the power of the Manilow gene pool.



I have need of a champion. Who among you will volunteer to serve me?



Ak'Shel

Magic: 15
Protection: 10
Might: 5



Michael

6
10
15



Kieran

8
8
8



Conrad

10
12
10

King Rick (aka Brian Blessed), resplendent in jewelled sweat bands, eyes up his potential champs.

The Company You Keep

Out of sync with the usual D&D ethos, *Lands* discards the 'generate your own half-elf dwarven cleric thief' approach for a 'choose from these lads - they'll do you' selection.



Ak'Shel

A Dracoid (half man, half dragon) and, despite the sunken eyes from having spent too many of his teen years at raves, Ak'Shel is a master magician and bugger-ugly to boot.



Michael

Now this is what we like to see, a few true-blue humans. A fighter in all senses of the word (i.e. he's thick, aggressive and has a willy noticeably smaller than his +4 battle axe).



Kieran

Kieran, or Bubbles as he's known in Kit-e-Kat circles, is a Huline: a sort of cat-cum-human. He's tough, quick on his feet and has a deadly sandpaper tongue. His litter tray may hog your inventory, though.



Conrad

Oh, I say, Con-rad is it. La-de-dah. Although you wouldn't say it to his face, Conrad is a bit of a ponce. He describes himself as: 'well rounded,' and, we must concede, he is bit adaptable.



Baccata

You can't actually choose Baccata, but he'll join you later in the game. Two sets of Thorndog arms make him formidable both in battle and in bed. He's also pretty much immortal, condemned to spend eternity looking like a bad case of zits.

Character stuff

This screen allows you to equip your characters and gives you their Might and Protection ratings - a much better system than ye olde DEX, CON, STR stuff. Also, each person can develop skills in fighting (the more battles, the merrier), roguery (picking locks, obtaining elusive objects, bluffing, etc.) and wizardry (rather obvious).



You, after choosing a character from a range of freelance heroes (see panel on the left), are hired by the King to nip over a lake and recover the Ruby of Truth, accompanied by a few of Richard's agents. No sooner do you discover it has been stolen, than you find Castle Gladstone has been ransacked, King Rick poisoned, and there are suspiciously orc-shaped footprints all over the kitchens.

Reviving the King will require four of the most esoteric items in the Lands to formulate an antidote. Having learnt the nature of these four objects, the castle is attacked again. The King's body is stolen, protective magic shield and all. Castle Gladstone's occupants have been scattered to the four winds. Dis-aster.

So, not only do you have to roam the Lands for the four antidote ingredients, pull together the scattered remnants of King Rick's entourage to form a resistance movement and find where Rick's body is being held, but you also have to explore over 30 levels of 3D first person perspective dungeons plus the requisite 'outsider' bits.

The quest

The beginning of *Lands of Lore*, it has to be said, is staged brilliantly. Instead of a long intro, narrated by an American crisp advert actor, going on and on about the story and the Lands and the dwarves and the elves, etc. you actually take part in the unfolding plot.

You're summoned to King Rick, who sends you off to Opinwood to recover the Ruby of Truth. This doubles neatly as a plot turn and a 'starter dungeon'. On the journey to Opinwood you're introduced to selling and bartering, through various weapon and herb vendors en route, fighting (a few rogues and bands of orcs block your passage), and levers and buttons, which are dotted about the place. For a seasoned RPG man this first half hour of adventuring is but a trifle. For an RPG virgin, this is a useful and clever entry level into the *Lands of Lore* system.

The system

The Westwood boys have obviously done their homework. Although the system is the usual mouse driven, flick screen affair (one from



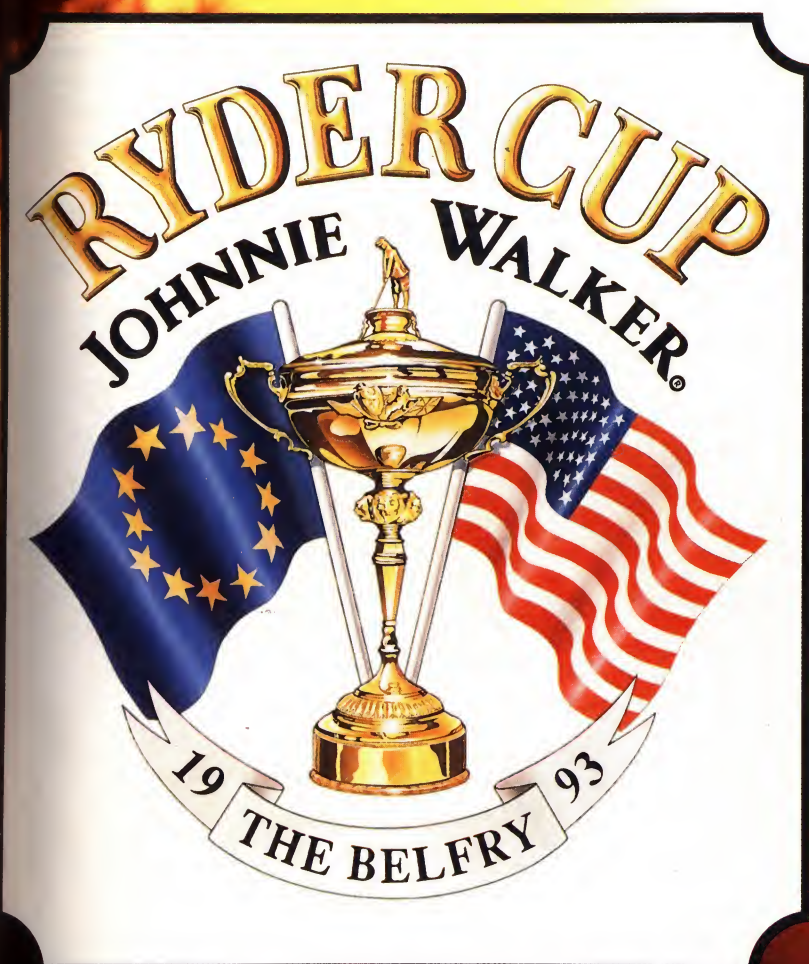
Interaction

An newish concept in the *Lands of Lore* experience is the limited 'chat and haggle' subsection. On meeting important persons (Gorkha chieftans, aged oracles, merchants, etc.) a little graphic screen pops up. A modicum of observational skill is needed to work out which objects are for sale/who is to be killed, but there is always a 'kill everyone' option for the less diplomatic, more Serbian-minded adventurer.

Left: Ak'Shel (son of Ak'Shal) attempts to secure himself some herbs.

CAPTAIN YOUR TEAM TO VICTORY

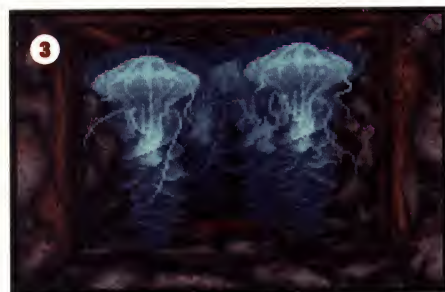
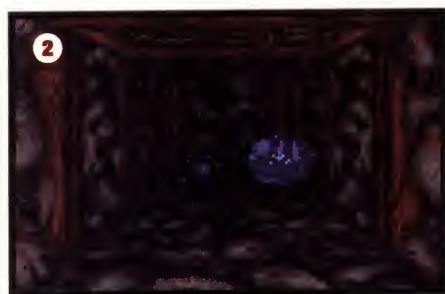
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Spells

Your spell parchment gradually lengthens as you find more scrolls to transcribe. New spells 'bubble' from their scrolls and 'plop', sparkling and glimmering, onto the page. Now that's flash. To cast, highlight an arcane turn with the mouse and pop the 'magic' icon below the character. Spells come in four levels of increasing power, but only higher level mages can attempt level 4.



1 Lightning

Four squillion volts of deadly electric bolts, anyone?

2 Spark

A general 'magic missile' attack.

3 Heal

Self-explanatory. Only levels 3 and 4 will cure poison.

4 Freeze

Very interesting. Levels 1 and 2 freeze the entire area for a time, allowing you to pass over swamp pits and other wet obstacles. Levels 3 and 4 are more localised, freeze-drying any nearby unfriendlies.

5 Fireballs

Strangely yellow, definitely deadly. The higher the level, the larger the balls and the wider the scorch radius.

which you can draw a thick family tree line via *Dungeon Master* to *Betrayal At Krondor*), the boys have added all manner of frills and spills to update the engine. For instance, the screens no longer flick (they rotate graphically through 90 degrees if you're turning, and then 'slide' towards you if you go forward) although you're still restricted to moving in graph paper-style grid blocks. Also, now, if you throw an object ahead of you it doesn't just jerk into the distance, but glides in a smooth bitmapped-scaling sort of a way through the air.

On the frills side, the boys have done away with popping-up icons. Now things sort of materialise. The compass falls down into the screen like a coin and rattles to a standstill; the Magic Atlas (read: auto-mapping feature) appears in a whoosh of flame; even your lantern glows like the real thing.

The spells, too, have been given the frilly-lingerie effect. The Heal spell casts a momentary green aura over injured companions and a large angelic chime sounds. Huge great fireballs whomp out of the icon screen and into the playing area. Lightning bolts drench the entire screen in blue, electric waves.

And the Freeze spell, at its most powerful, encases any nearby monsters in a block of ice. Very plush.

Later...

But when you get down to it, minus the upmarket Habitat trappings, *Lands of Lore* is basically a maze-based RPG, and so it must be measured against all its contemporaries.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Lands of Lore isn't such a vast step forward compared to its main rivals. *Ultima Underworld* and *Betrayal At Krondor* both use bitmap texturing and panoramic movement routines to firmly disengage themselves from the classic D&D square dungeon designs. However, on the branch dominated by *Eye of the Beholder* (showing its age in a very poor Part III) and *Dungeon Master* (very old but still the best designed dungeon epic, short of *Ultima Underworld I*), *Lands of Lore* excels.

Ultima Underworld II

Eye of the Beholder II

Eye of the Beholder III

Legends of Valour

Betrayal At Krondor

Dungeon Master

Lands of Lore

It measures up well. Its lacy '90s look keeps its appeal for we nouvelle gamers (who have come to expect a little presentation now and again) while its plot-driven storyline and interactive elements add still more.

But the interest level does have a tendency to ebb and flow. After a few hours of continuous play, frankly, I got bored. But a day later, after a rather good French film on Channel 4 took my mind away from little people with oddly shaped ears, I was back, hacking my way through the swamps with a large sledgehammer.

The range of locations has something to do with this. You're no longer encased in a level-by-level dungeon; you're out there, soaring through the outdoors, investigating swamps, minor dungeons, castles, towers, mines, forests and all manner of geographic hot spots. Each section has its own unique graphics, perils, characters, monster-basts, subquests and little interactive bits.

Niggles

Niggle-wise, although the gameplay is extremely well staged so you don't end up too dead too early, combat – regardless of the monster – is very samey. The standard two frames of animation per nasty (plus an 'injured' frame) doesn't help; neither does their lack of intelligence. They refuse to run from a continuous onslaught of fireballs nor do they even try to dodge my 11x8 death axe. What? Do they not comprehend that Ak'Shel (son of Ak'Shal)



will soon be wearing their hides as a bikini? Puzzles, too, fall into the 'samey' box. Pressure plate and lever combos usually open puzzle-type doors and, while there are cryptic clues sketched on some walls, they're generally of the hangman variety – try working out this combination: 'L_ft Righ_Ce_ter'.

Also, the range of spells (five at the last count) is somewhat limiting for the imaginative spellcaster. And there is but one woman, the wafer-thin vaguely transparent robe-wearing princess.

But, overall, me and the lads (probably about five million of us) are suckers for this kind of extravaganza, and *Lands of Lore* delivers the goods, well dressed and bulging. It's a tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye of the Beholder III* could have been and insists, quite pointedly, that the flick-screen dungeon festivals of yore are still alive and kicking and biting through your dwarf's leather codpiece. **Z**

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 16MHz

Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk: 15Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA/MCGA

Soundcards: All major soundcards

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

Comments: IBM 100% compatibles.
386 recommended.

PC ZONE score

Nice, very nice.

90

Price: £35.99 Out: Mid September

Published: Virgin/Westwood Associates

Telephone: 081 960 2255



(Left) Even in the half-gloom of the Urbish mines, objects are not exactly hard to find. (Bottom left) The early parts of the game are littered with plaques to nudge you in the right direction. (Below) The ever observant Baccata.





SEAL TEAM



(Right) The helicopter you've called in is dealing with the village, while you prepare to hand grenade the ox cart. (Below) You take a couple of seconds out to roll a quick joint while your team mates stick 'calling cards' in the mouths of the dead and dying Vietcong soldiers.



Duncan MacDonald was the ideal person to review *Seal Team* from Electronic Arts because he actually served three tours of duty in Vietnam himself. (*'So the American army recruited a four year old British child did it? Do me a favour.' A reader.*)

Plus **Mark Burgess** on Vietnam the movie, Vietnam the book and Vietnam the whole damned thing.

Quick walkthrough



'VE GOT A LOT of ground to cover in only five pages, so what I'll do is talk you through the basics of *Seal Team* as fast as I can. Here goes.

(1) *Seal Team* attempts to simulate the experiences of the elite American foot soldier during the Vietnam war.

(2) The game is put together in much the same way as a flight sim – indeed it actually uses the same basic engine as Chuck Yeager's *Air Combat*.

(3) The opening screen allows you to choose which of the four soldiers on offer you're going to control. You can't change anyone's name, but you can give yourself a 'handle'. You always play the pointman: the bloke at the front who gives the orders. The computer deals with the other three.

(4) Also on the initial screen is an option to choose the year you start your career: 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969. The main difference between them is that the later the date, the better the available technology (more weapons to choose from).

(5) You now find yourself in the in-depth mission talk through. It's a close-up moving map of the area you're about to visit. Your 'waypoints' are shown and text boxes beneath the moving map tell you what you're expected to do at each stage of the operation. After having taken all of this in it's time to click on another box, which takes you to the equip screen.

(6) You now have to sort out who's taking what into the target zone. If you're expected to blow something up you'll want to make sure that somebody is carrying explosives. The more equipment a soldier takes, by the way, the heavier his backpack will be, and therefore the slower he'll be on his feet.

(7) You've memorised the plan, you've kitted out your lads, you've got a team member (your medic) who is roughly the equivalent of the person in *Star Trek* who wears a red shirt when landing on a dangerous planet. Now it's time to enter the war zone.

Still a quick walkthrough

(1) Blam! Automatic insertion time, by helicopter or boat. If things are too heavy for you (i.e. incoming grenades and tracers abungo), you can press a key and the craft that dropped you will pluck you back up immediately and then you can choose your own, safer, drop zone.

(2) Once the insertion craft has well and truly buggered off, the game really starts – and it's tension from the word go: a tension enhanced by the buzzing of mosquitoes, the chattering of crickets and the occasional distant echoey squawks of various jungle birds. (This is with a Sound Blaster of course.)

(3) The initial viewpoint is the external camera – the chase camera – which is centred on the back of the pointman (you). You can zoom out a bit and rotate 180° (thereby seeing your three bitmapped chums), but the most sensible course of action is to hit the F1 key, which plops the view into first person perspective. You're now looking through the pointman's eyes, *Ultima Underworld*-style.

(4) Another sensible opening move is to hit the 1 key; this instructs you (and your wingmen) to adopt the prone position. If there are any VC about, you'll now hopefully see them before they see you.

(5) Now might be a good time to call up the map screen. Just like map screens in all good flight sims, this one is zoom in and outable, shows you your waypoints, and allows you to play about with just about anything you like. You can split your lads up and send them to different positions, telling them to run, move stealthily, snipe, blow things up and so on. You can even call in airstrikes. It's all a question of clicking on what you want to command (as long as it's available on your particular mission), giving it a waypoint on the map and then clicking on one of the many instructions.

(6) So where were we? Ah yes, lying prone and motionless at the drop point. And what was the mission? Let's say it's to move north to a small village (two kilometres away) and to take a particular high ranking VC prisoner before legging it west to the pick-up zone.

'Quick' walkthrough continued

(1) Click forwards on the joystick. Still remaining prone, you and your team will now inch forwards at slow speed, on elbows and knees. If anything targetable passes before your field of view (be it animal, vegetable or mineral and as long as you're in the first person view), a target reticle will appear. It's sort of like you've got your own built in HUD – you have visual information beamed onto your retinas. You'll be told what the target is (VC, civilian, ox-cart, hooch, bunker, prisoner, orphan etc.) and also its distance.

(2) The computer-controlled team members don't just follow you blindly they'll be scanning around for themselves, checking through 360°. If they spot anything you've missed, you'll be informed via your HUD.

(3) Okay, so there you all are, inching along on your tummies at one squillimetre an hour. You've got two kilometres to cover and time isn't necessarily on your side. The question is: do you spend the next three weeks crawling through the undergrowth with loads of horrible, scary jungle insects creeping up your nostrils? Or do you press key 2, which pops you all into a crouching position, thereby giving you extra speed but at the same time increasing your chances of being spotted?

(4) In fact sod all of that. Let's move into a fully upright position (key 3) and then push forward again on the joystick so that the entire team is running at full speed. Here we are, you darned cowardly yellow Geeks! Johnny Yankee is inbound!

(5) Aaaargh! Gunfire. The screen turns red for a moment, and a text message then pops onto your HUD, saying: 'You are bleeding heavily'. Oh dear. But then the gunfire stops, as

VIETNAM – THE STORY

Vietnam is an S-shaped country between Cambodia, Laos and China. The Vietnamese drove out the Chinese in 1939, the French in 1954 and the Americans in 1973. Not bad for a country the size of Nevada.

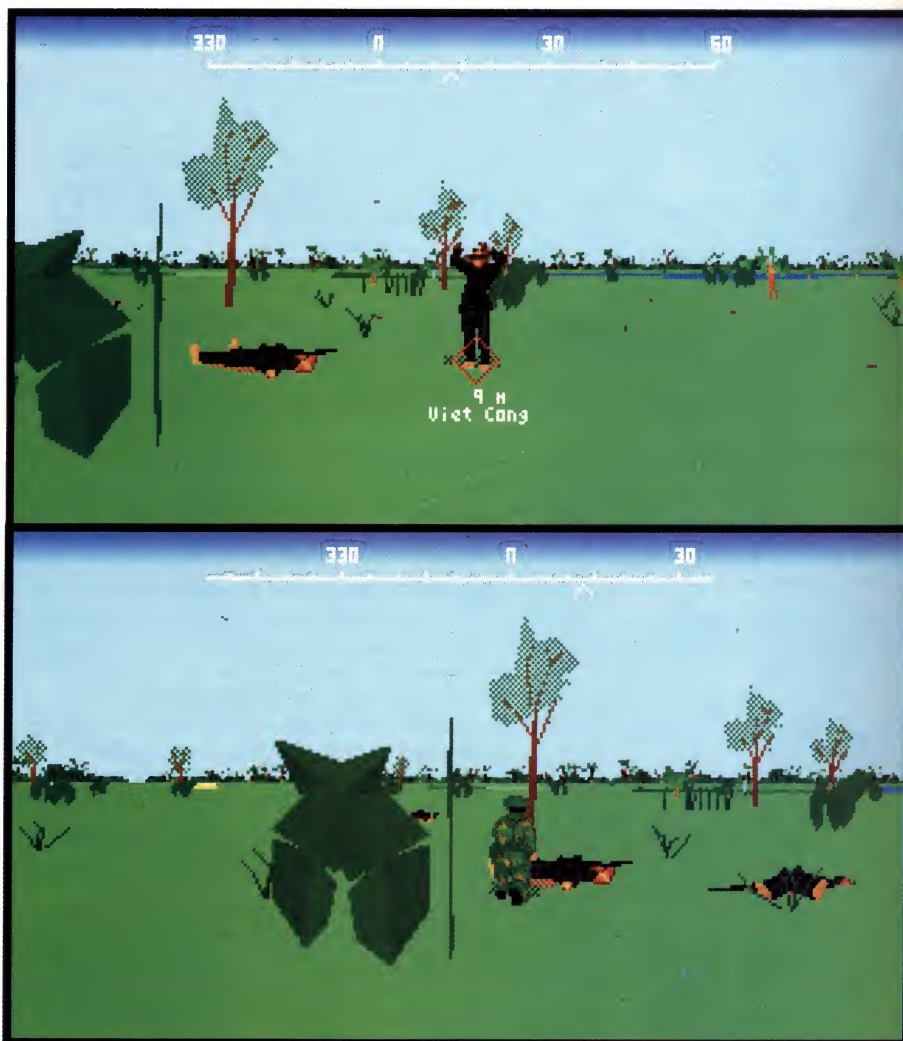
First contact with the West was about 1500, with merchants and missionaries. France captured Saigon in 1859 and annexed Cochinchina in 1862. This was later merged into French Indo-China. After the Japanese defeat at the end of the Second World War Ho Chi Minh proclaimed a republic in 1945.

The French attempt to reassert their hegemony ended with the humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu (1954). At the Geneva conference of 1954 the country was divided into communist North, under Ho Chi Minh and non-communist South, under Ngo Dinh Diem. This was to be a temporary measure pending elections and unification. Diem refused to hold them and declared an independent republic in 1955. The War ensued, with the Americans entering on the side of the South to preserve their right not to hold free elections.

For the Americans, the war lasted from 1965 to 1973, when they withdrew. The North immediately invaded the South and gained control in 1975. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was declared in 1976.

'On atmosphere
alone Seal Team
scores
massively...
don your
anorak, dim the
lights and
become
thoroughly
engrossed.'

(Below) The VC on the left had tried to surrender too, but unluckily for him one of your team mates was stoked up on PCP. (Bottom) You decided to kill the other VC as well, and so now it's time for the 'calling cards' to be placed.





(Top) The in-game moving map, zoomed in to the point where you can clearly see the individual soldiers' fields of view (the soldier looking to the right will be able to see the insertion craft). You can issue orders to your men and the various support units by pointing and clicking on the relevant icons. (Above) The pre-mission briefing. (Below) A drug crazed SEAL kicks an elderly female civilian to death. (He doesn't really. Ed.)

suddenly as it started. Your computer-controlled wingmen have dealt with the incident. You can see a dead vc to your right, lying on his back.

(6) Pressing the S key initiates a search of the area... your team-mates are about to go and search the body, so relax and enjoy. Watch them as they diminish in size to the east, frisk the dead vc and then return. Result? Two weapons and one document seized.

(7) Back into the prone position, and, inching through the undergrowth, you spot a civilian. The distance readout on your HUD is decreasing rapidly and there's very little left/right movement, meaning the civilian in question (a couple of pixels at the moment, but getting larger all the time) is innocently strolling directly towards you. Once he spots you, he'll run away, screaming, and your position will be given away to any nearby vc. Instant dilemma...

(8)...Do you empty an entire clip into said civilian? Or rely on luck that he doesn't spot you? Do you throw caution to the wind, jump up and run into the village shouting 'I am John Wayne!'? Or do you change direction yourself and crawl out of the civilian's path? Or how about calling in an air strike to divert attention? Hey, you could even do an airstrike on the civilian, killing two birds with one stone, so to speak.



VIETNAM – THE MOVIES

1969 (1988)

A film about draft dodging and teenage rebellion. No helicopters.

Apocalypse Now (1979)

One of the greatest films ever made. *Apocalypse Now* is a retelling of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, a novel dealing with the corrupting affects of colonialism. Towards the end Coppola gets so intoxicated with the beauty of it and all the plot gets lost. No matter.

BAT 21 (1988)

Gene Hackman plays a reconnaissance expert in this mess of action and sentimentality.

Born on the Fourth of July (1989)

Political conscience and dollops of sentimentality meet in 'Tom Cruise acts shock'.

The Boys in Company C (1977)

Grimly funny story following a bunch of marines through training to Vietnam.

Coming Home (1978)

The story of a war-widow nurse (Jane Fonda) who falls for a paraplegic veteran (Jon Voight). Simplistic.

The Deer Hunter (1978)

Three steelworkers at work, play and war. Takes a fairly neutral stance on the war but you need a strong stomach to sit through the final scene – a rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Full Metal Jacket (1987)

The film follows a platoon of marines from boot camp to body bag. Kubrick's thesis is that the soldiers are so butalised by the training that they are more or less dead before the shooting even starts.

Good Morning Vietnam (1987)

Miserable, clichéd film saved only by Robin Williams as the disc jockey anti-hero.

Go Tell the Spartans (1978)

Burt Lancaster plays a major who believes that the war is unwinnable in this anti-war movie.

The Green Berets (1968)

John Wayne in the first, the most risible and the most insulting Vietnam movie. Ends with Wayne telling the camp mascot, a Vietnamese orphan, 'You're what this war is all about'. Emetic.

Hamburger Hill (1987)

Another film which traces a group of unhappy and bewildered GIs from training to combat. The action scenes are amongst the best.

The Odd Angry Shot (1979)

The Aussies in Vietnam, sent there by their crooked politicians. Like *Gallipoli*, with its class consciousness and bleak humour.

Off Limits (1988)

Known also as *Saigon*, a thriller with Vietnam providing the backdrop. Is one of the top brass killing hookers?

Platoon (1987)

Powerful and disturbing film describing a 19 year old's baptism of fire. Oliver Stone – himself a veteran – produced a strong and realistic film that started Hollywood's 'year of Vietnam'.

Vietnam Journey (1974)

Strange documentary about Jane Fonda's trip to North Vietnam. If you like celebrities acting concerned in front of cameras, you'll love this.

(9) Your dilemma is solved for you... the screen goes red again, and the HUD message reads: 'The pointman dies of his wounds'. You forgot about the wounds, didn't you? Switching to the external view, you see yourself lying dead on the ground. Your joystick movements and frantic key presses are to no avail. You're about to be treated to the funeral screen, and then you'll be starting a new career.

Quick walkthrough over

Sounds good, doesn't it? And to a certain extent it is good - very good, and very big, with heaps upon heaps of varied missions. In fact *Seal Team* would be absolutely and totally brilliant but for one major flaw: the implementation. What I'll do is to refer directly to the sketchy notes which I usually make whilst playing a game that I am currently reviewing. Ready? Let's go...

JERKOVISION™: The trademark symbol is necessary here, because if any game ever deserved to hold the Jerky Graphic copyright, it's *Seal Team*. The bitmapped soldiers are fine, but the polygon stuff is appalling. It's a case of Katherine Hepburn goes pneumatic drilling with Shakin' Stevens during a slow-motion earthquake. (And that's on a 486 DX 33.)

GRASS: *Seal Team* should have included areas of long grass where your soldiers would be totally concealed when prone (like in the films, the real war etc.) **Not WYSIWYG:** The debriefing session can be totally inaccurate. I actually found myself being commended on a well executed mission when my final action had been to call in an air attack... on myself.



MOUSE NIGHTMARE: The mouse pointer, 99% of the time, has a mind of its own. On the option screens it's simply highly annoying, but in-game it can get you killed. (An emergency extraction under heavy fire? Great, but first you've got to set the helicopter's waypoint and by the time you've coaxed the crosshairs into the correct position, your entire team is suffering from rigor mortis.)

CRAP SHAPES: The boat, plane and helicopter shapes are very basic, as are the buildings and so on. If the game ran smoothly I would be content: a necessary concession to the limits of processor speed. However, what you end up with in *Seal Team* is both crap shapes and Jerkovision™.

AUTO AIM, BLAM BLAM: I crept up behind a VC who was standing between a well and a hooch and was so near I could have flicked a wad of cotton wool at the back of his leg. The aiming reticle highlighted the well and it highlighted the hooch, but it wouldn't target the VC. He eventually spotted and killed me while I was faffing around with the mouse on the map screen, trying to designate him as an airstrike target.

MIDWINTER SOUND: For the most part, *Seal Team*'s sound effects are brilliant - although you do really need a Soundblaster. However, if ever a game cried out for simulated 'surround sound', this is it. In *Midwinter*, things got louder as you turned towards them. Not so here. Bah.

JINGOISTIC: Speaks for itself, really. *Seal Team* is Buf-Puf clean. Nobody in Vietnam took drugs. Nobody went mad. Nobody bayoneted a pig, stamped on a child's head, ripped his clothes off, rolled in the mud and then claimed to be Valkalla, the Norse God of Pointy Things. Etcetera.

MOUSE FOR GUNS: Although the HUD reticle works well for identifying targets, it would have been significantly better if you could have used a mouse pointer to actually aim your guns and grenades. ☹

VIETNAM - THE BOOKS

The Quiet American Graham Greene

One of the great novels of the century set during the last years of French rule. Was made into a travesty of a film with the book's anti Americanism converted to anti Communism.

Chickenhawk Robert Mason

Memoirs of a helicopter pilot. Conveys the parochialism and incomprehension of the average draftee.

'Is that what you wear during the assaults?' I was dressed in fatigues, wearing my flak jacket and pistol, at the photographer's request.

'Yes.'

'Does that-' He pointed.

'Flak vest.'

'Does that flak vest stop bullets?'

'No. As a matter of fact, it won't even slow them down.'

Dispatches Michael Herr

Brilliantly written, a classic piece of journalism.

Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu Philadelphia J B Lippincott

The story of the French defeat.

People's War People's Army Vo Nguyen Giap/Foreign Language Press Hanoi

The man himself on how to prosecute and sustain a guerrilla war. Handy hints.

VOX POP

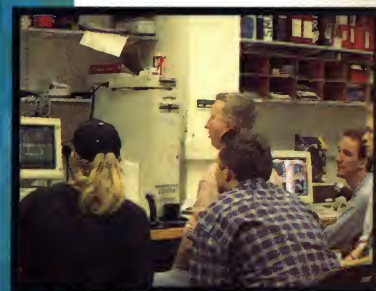
If you've read the Club PC pages you'll know that every month we'll be inviting some subscribers into the office to let us know what they think of one of the month's big games. Our guest reviewers this month are Daniel Emery (likes strategy games, currently playing a lot of *Railroad Tycoon*, also a big fan of flight sims.) Gareth Ramsey (likes 'complicated games', *Civilization* is a fave. Also confesses to adoring *3D Monster Maze* on the Spectrum) and James Bourne (A speed merchant hooked on MicroProse *Grand Prix*) All of our panel were taken with the concept of the game 'A very good idea,' opined Gareth 'and quite easy to pick up.' James saw the atmosphere as a strong selling point 'but a soundcard would be essential.' However although Gareth commented that 'You're able to wander around and do what you want, unlike most shoot 'em-ups'. All three were irritated at not being able to go into buildings or bunkers.

Most criticisms seemed to be saved for the graphics: 'A little limited' reckoned Daniel 'Very *Stealth Fighter*.' James pointed out that 'They could have been made better since there wasn't the need for speed that there is in a flight sim.' In fact there was a feeling that basing the game on a flight sim engine may have been a mistake. The different viewpoints were popular but for James there was 'no sensation of yourself shooting. That could have been built in if it hadn't been built from a flight sim model.'

The consensus seemed to be that the long term appeal of *Seal Team* would depend on the variety of the later missions but it was 'A damned good first attempt'. Daniel probably summed the mood up best: 'For what it is it's pretty good but for what it's based on it could have been a lot better.' Why can't we come up with quotes like that?

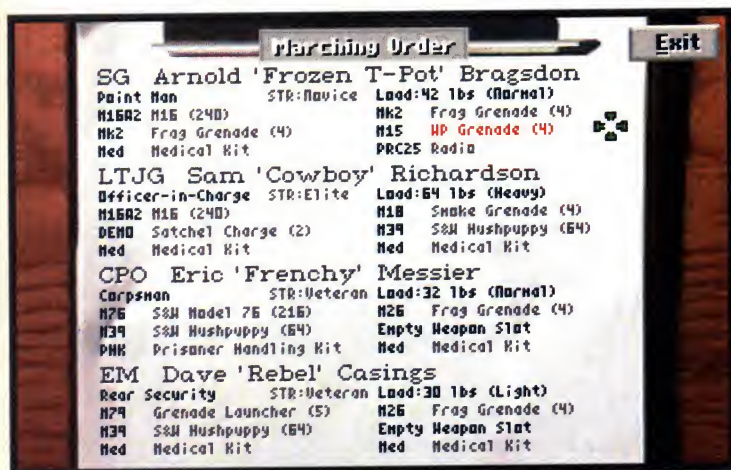


(Above) Hey, it's Elvis Presley... quick, pass me a frag grenade. (Left) The drugs are wearing off. Quick, back to base for some more.





(Top) Exterior view, directly after insertion. (Above) 'Sarge, the boat can travel on land', 'I think you've overdone it on the mescaline again, corporal!' (Below) The weapons select screen. Click on any weapon slot and you can cycle through all the other 'available' (of which there are heaps). (Bottom) Elvis spots the gravestones and has a weird 'deja vu'.



Oh dear

There are three sides to the *Seal Team* crap/not crap equation. On side one are the polygon graphics, which aren't exactly (understatement approaching) the best you'll have seen, either in definition or animation. On side two however – and this is a gigantic plus – is the atmosphere of the game: much of which is given over to sheer tension, as you lay prone, with a sweaty groin, peering at a distant hut, with a parrot squawking in your ear. On atmosphere alone, *Seal Team* scores massively... don your anorak, dim the lights and become thoroughly engrossed. The third side of the equation, however, drags things back down again – because when you approach the thicker end of the realism wedge things begin to fall apart. Maybe EA's mistake was to use the *Chuck Yeager* engine in the first place. Maybe *Seal Team* should have been written from the ground up – especially as far as the graphics are concerned. I don't know. Whatever.

A final note

If you've been waiting for a simulation of this sort (i.e. first person perspective soldiers) for absolutely ages (like I have), and are disappointed with the first one available (i.e. *Seal Team*), then I have to quickly add a couple of things. Firstly, the version I played had not gone through final bug testing so faults like inaccurate debriefings and not selecting targets may well be corrected by the time the game is released.

Secondly if (and, I repeat, if) you're prepared to forgive *Seal Team* its shortcomings, then you'll find that there is actually a corker of a game lurking between all the annoying bits. And you can forgive *Seal Team* if, when playing, you blame everything on the chemicals Vietnam soldiers were so fond of. For instance, the jerky polygon graphics don't matter too much if you pretend the jerkiness is induced by having taken too much acid. As for the rather iffy debriefing sessions: simply pretend you still haven't quite 'come down' from the alcohol, mescaline and quaalude omelette you had for breakfast, and that the person debriefing you is stoked up to the eyeballs on angel dust. And so on.

Like I said, if you're prepared to forgive *Seal Team* its shortcomings, you'll still be in for a good time because of the tension and atmosphere. If you're not prepared to forgive its shortcomings, however, then I suggest you wait until somebody else releases another first person perspective soldier game. Quite how long you'll be waiting, though, I cannot say. ☒

PC ZONE

score

In storyboard form
I imagine it looked
fabulous. In transition
to code, however, it
feels like something
has gone astray.

77

Price: £44.99 Out: September
Published: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 0753 549442

PC ZONE

specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 33MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 7Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Creative
Labs, Media Vision, Advanced
Gravis, Roland
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

WEAPONS

Tornado received a Classic award in the September 1993 edition of *PC Zone*. Duncan MacDonald, *Tornado* jock extraordinaire, has prepared this keyboard template exclusively for *PC Zone* readers. Watch out for more essential templates in upcoming issues of *PC Zone* – the world's greatest PC games magazine.

K

SELECT WEAPONS PACKAGE

L

SELECT DELIVERY MODE

 (ENTER)


ARM AIR TO GROUND WEAPON

ALT + **ENTER**

ARM AIR TO AIR WEAPON

CTRL + **ENTER**

CANCEL ARMED WEAPON

 OR JOYSTICK BUTTON 2

CYCLE AIR TO AIR WEAPONS

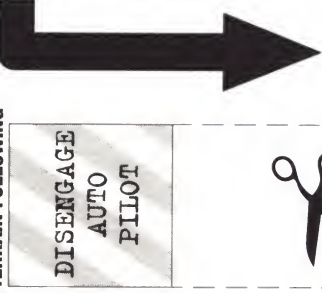
JETTISON EXTERNAL STORES

ALT + **J** FUEL TANKS

CTRL + **J** ALL STORES

SHIFT + **J** ALL STORES + FUEL

USE WITH CAUTION WHEN TERRAIN FOLLOWING



DISENGAGE AUTO PILOT

AUTO PILOT MODES

MOUSE CONTROLS FOR RADAR
DECREASE RANGE = CTRL + LEFT BUTTON
INCREASE RANGE = CTRL + RIGHT BUTTON
DESIGNATE TARGET = LEFT BUTTON
CANCEL DESIGNATE = RIGHT BUTTON

RADAR MODES

R GROUND RADAR

SHIFT + **R** AIR RADAR

RADAR OFF CTRL + R


DRONE VIEW

SPECTATOR VIEW

REMOTE VIEW


SATELLITE VIEW


TRACK VIEW

TERRAIN FOLLOW 

ALT/HDG ACQUIRE 

TRACK 

APPROACH 

AUTO THROTTLE 



W WINGS FORWARD ONE STAGE

S WINGS BACK ONE STAGE

Q FLAPS UP ONE STAGE

A FLAPS DOWN ONE STAGE

E ELECTRONIC COUNTER MEASURES

C RELEASE CHAFF

F RELEASE FLARES

ALTERNATIVELY **CTRL** + **E** EJECT

B WHEEL BRAKES

G OR **U** GEAR UP/DOWN

OPEN THROTTLE INCREASE REHEAT

CLOSE THROTTLE DECREASE REHEAT

AIR BRAKES (IN FLIGHT)

THRUST REVERSERS (ON GROUND)



This keyboard template has been designed by the PC Zone editorial team for purchasers of the game *Tornado*, published in the UK by Digital Integration Ltd. It is not approved or endorsed by Digital Integration in any way. All rights recognised. And if you don't already own *Tornado*, go out and buy it. It's great.

NAVIGATOR'S STATION CONTROLS

D MFD SELECT

[LEFT TAB SELECT

] RIGHT TAB SELECT

< MAP DISPLAY ZOOM IN

> MAP DISPLAY ZOOM OUT

0 MAP ORIGIN TOGGLE

TAB SELECT ACTIVE DISPLAY

N SKIP TO NEXT WAYPOINT

T TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY

CTRL + **T** CANCEL OPPORTUNITY

M FULL SCREEN MOVING MAP





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Available for the IBM PC and Compatibles (August 1993), Commodore Amiga (March 1994) and Apple Macintosh (March 1994).
For further information please contact: North America (818) 348-3711 • Europe (071) 328-3267 (U.K.)

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The Lost Vikings



(Above) A viking not only lost but about to remember that he is prone to sudden attacks of vertigo.



Vikings. They're big and hairy and spend their time getting

drunk and beating up cows.

Patrick McCarthy, on the other hand, makes all his own pillowcases and never wears the same dress twice. It's not really relevant – we just thought you should know.



AS MY MOTHER always said, aliens are just people with more eyes. Just as there are different types of people, there are doubtless many types of alien; good aliens, bad aliens and aliens who would be good but for one or two problems at home that they're trying to get their heads round. (There are also those large breasted aliens who Captain Kirk gets lumbered with teaching the meaning of love to, but we won't go into that here.) Tomator, the intergalactic life-form trader, was probably a good alien lumbered with a bad job. He probably didn't like himself very much for hyperspacing his way around galaxies 'borrowing' specimens, with a view to selling them back home to the interplanetary equivalent of

Whipsnade Zoo. It probably gave him ulcers and guilty dreams. But that's what he did. What the heck – it's a career.

Olaf the Stout, Erik the Swift and Baleog the Absolute Pan-Head Nutcase (*Fierce. It's Fierce. Ed.*) were three harmless Vikings, if you'll forgive the oxymoron, lying in their beds minding their own business after a hard day's slaughter. Imagine their consternation to find themselves beamed into a large alien spaceship owned by the aforementioned

Tomator. Imagine the culture shock. How would you explain the lighting system to them? And the shortage of roll-mop herrings?

Needless to say, they badly want to escape and make it back to their homes, their ginger-haired children and their unsightly wives. (Remember, these are hard men, well-used to terror.) Your mission, as the purchaser of this game, is to get them home by guiding them through a series of levels comprised of platform-based puzzles and traps.

Along the way, you have to avoid or kill the mobile enemies who appear in the form of people from various zones of time and space (into which the Vikings are beamed). Finally you have to defeat the evil Tomator.

It's complicated by the fact that each of the three characters has just one basic ability – Erik's is athleticism, Baleog's is general sword-based butchery and Olaf... well, he's got a big shield. They also have secondary abilities: Erik can batter walls down with his head, Baleog can fire a bow and arrow and Olaf... well, he's got a big shield.

You have to get all three to the exit of each level. The idea is that puzzles can only be solved with certain combinations of the three warriors. There are no time limits, and it's very much a case of trial and error and learning from your mistakes. If one or more of them dies you have to restart the level, the only penalty being some smart arse comments from the Vikings themselves. Get them all through to the exit where you are given a password (enabling you to bypass that level), then you're off to the next level.



(Above) No directions, no map, no signposts, no helpful policeman and worst of all not a cab in sight.



IN PERSPECTIVE

Gods

Humans

Lemmings 2

Lost Vikings

Risky Woods

POWER-UPS

Each level has a fair smattering of power-ups. Some are in plain view, others are hidden. Generally it's necessary to find them to complete the level. They can be passed between characters, from each according to their abilities to each according to their needs: as Jack Duckworth once said.

FOOD: Heals one health point.

STEAK: Heals two health points.

ARMOUR: Raises your Viking's durability from the standard three hit-points to a positively luxurious four. For those specially violent occasions.

BOMB: Blows things up (including you, so watch it).

SMART BOMB: Blows things up (but doesn't harm you – which makes everyone shout 'Smart!').

FLAMING ARROW: Give this to Baleog and he'll only need to shoot baddies once, rather than three or four times.

KEY: Colour co-ordinated with the lock it opens.



ERIK
THE SWIFT

Erik is the Linford Christie of the Viking world – except they didn't have lycra in those days, so he wraps his nethers in goat-skin. Things get pretty ripe all round in the summer. With a bit of speed he can head-butt his way through doors and walls. This behaviour signalled the end of his stage career as 'Marvo the Memory Man.'



OLAF
THE STOUT

Olaf is the Viking equivalent of Bernard Manning. He doesn't really have an 'ability' as such, but, if need be, his little friends can hide behind his shield which can also double as a hang-glider.



BALEOG
THE PIERCE

Baleog, rather too fond of hacking and slashing, has the eco-friendly approach of his descendants in the whaling fleets, and freelances as a food processor. His secondary ability is shooting arrows all over the shop.

OUR HEROES

The levels are grouped by a general theme. This changes every six or seven levels when you reach the 'exit portal' that warps the Vikings off to another exotic location. Each level is physically quite large, with several screens' worth of scenery to explore and find your way out of and is, like the characters, graphically detailed.

Puzzling is a major part of the game and at first, as long as you're careful with the enemies you have to fight, everything proceeds at a measured pace. As you progress through the levels, however, it isn't long before arcade elements begin to edge into it. The baddies move more quickly and become able to jump over Olaf's shield, so that you can't just position Baleog behind Olaf's shield and fire arrows at them – you have to get in there and scrap. There's some intricate platform leaping to do, too.

The puzzles get ever more fiendish and inventive. One particularly imaginative one uses the way the screen scrolls between characters as part of the solution. Another requires excellent button-pressing skills: on a factory level you need to press a button, switch control between characters, press another button with the second character, switch back and press another with the first – all as the second character drops

through the air towards an electrical charge that will do nothing for his health and welfare. Get one of the button-presses wrong and it's curtains – or skins draped over windows, or whatever.

It cries out for piano lessons, touch-typing ability or maybe even two players. The number of different control keys means it is possible to play with two players, but it isn't ideal, because the scrolling of the screen can often leave one player off-screen. The controls are perhaps the game's only weakness: I first saw this on the Super NES, the controllers of which have eight possible buttons to

allocate to a game, and they're well-used for this game. Most PC joysticks have two so, even if you have a joystick, a lot of the controls will have to be carried out by keyboard, and it's always possible to hit the wrong one in a hurry.

Nevertheless it's a minor point; generally the game's a good one. The animation is fine and provides spectacular and gory deaths, but the attention to detail isn't quite as good as the SNES – that version has a built-in screen saver, and this one doesn't. Apart from that it's a great game with plenty of levels and reasonable challenge that should appeal to puzzle and platform-lovers alike. Start Viking around. ☒

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: Not specified

Installation: Optional

Minimum Hard Disk: 13Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland

Controls: Joystick, Keyboard

PC ZONE score

An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, I can't be bothered).

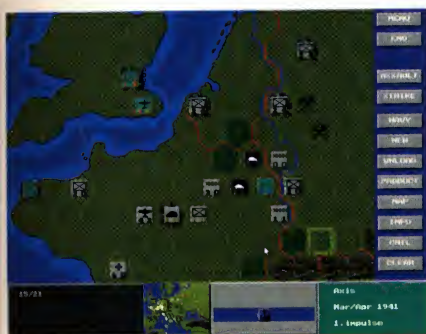
80

Price: £34.99 **Out:** Now

Published: Interplay

Telephone: 0865 390029

1939. Europe is divided and paralysed, trembling under the might of German people who march with their legs unnaturally high in the air. Nothing changes, does it? Andrew Wright checks over an ambitious WW2 wargame and mentions 'hexes'.



Erm, pardon me, could you tell me the way to Dunkirk, please?



YOU'LL PROBABLY think that *Clash of Steel* simply involves a number of 50 ton steel monsters blasting each other into scrap. Wrong (for once) – equally important in this game is using that same steel to build, fortify and bomb.

Clash of Steel is, in fact, a large-scale strategic wargame that lets you refight the entire European branch of the Second World War.

The game comes on a single disk with a 72 page A5 manual and separate hard disk installation instructions. There aren't any sound options; the internal speaker is a Sound Blaster or a Sound Blaster Pro. Well, I'm all for standardisation, but this seems to be taking it a bit far. This is the first game I've ever come across that didn't work with a Sound Blaster on its default settings. It works with everything else, so maybe SSI have a problem?

First mention of hex

The map covers the whole of Europe and North Africa with each hex being 50 miles across and each turn two months long. Hexes can be one of 11 terrain types. Land units are corps or armies and there are naval and air forces, too.

Apart from infantry and tank units there are engineers for creating fortifications and paratroops for dropping on strongly defended hexes. At sea, there are carrier groups, submarines, transports, escorts and artificial harbours. Air units are used for tactical bombing but strategic bombing (ports, oil or industry) is also possible.

Clash of Steel looks just like any other traditional computer wargame but scratch beneath the surface and there's far more to it. If you decide to play the on Axis side, you can't just trundle your Panzers into France for the summer holidays and then wheel them off to Russia for some winter skiing around Moscow. You have to take charge of unit production, naval task forces, strategic bombing, convoys, supply and research into new weapons.

Once you've managed that, it's time to work out how to achieve your strategic objectives with one eye on the weather and the other on your political and military allies.

The board game analogy™

Clash of Steel reminds me of board games like *Third Reich*. It tries to cover the same ground but, being a computer game, it can reach into territory that counters, dice and thick rule books can't. And you don't need friends.

Apart from acting as an intelligent opponent with five difficulty levels, it acts as umpire, too, handling all the exasperating little details. This feature is more important than in many games of its type as there are a number of complexities that couldn't even be entertained if played on a board. For example, the unit values change from turn to turn, based on a number of factors like weather, position and even the changing level of technology, which improves

'Good graphics, a neat interface and above average gameplay.'

efficiency and effectiveness.

The computer works out the supply status of each unit and divides the battle zones into different partitions, applying the level of supply to each unit's morale and efficiency. Complicated? I'd rather fill out a tax return.

Beginners can start off at Pacifist level and work up to General, and there are options for making it harder for one side or the other.

Each game turn starts with an economy phase in which the players buy new units. Turns are normally divided into four to six impulses with the possibility of more in good weather. Some actions are only allowed in the first two impulses, such as amphibious landings and placing units in reserve. To complicate matters, some units have several Action Points which they can

use to move or attack, while others may have one or even none. Combat is resolved by the computer and the result displayed as a series of icons.

Final mention of hex

The game is well thought out, with nice 16 colour graphics and smooth scrolling, the user interface is competent and there is no difficulty in getting involved. It does have some frustrating features, but no more or less than any other wargame.

It sometimes tries too hard to force players into following the actual course of the war, and there are all sorts of rules designed to prevent deviation. For instance, a German attack on France is heavily weighted in the German player's favour to compensate for the fact that they can't come through the Ardennes and take the Allied armies by surprise. This can have a detrimental effect on the game, as nobody likes to feel they're not in control. On the other hand, it would clearly be foolish to allow the Yanks to come in on Hitler's side.

Historical strategies work best, too. For example, the Allies need to develop anti-submarine gear to get the convoys through for the build-up, while the Russians have to give way slowly and use their most fearsome weapon, the Russian winter, to stop the German thrust.

My other reservation is the level of chance: too many rules seem to be reduced to a 20% chance of this and a 30% chance of that. For example, amphibious landings can fail 20% of the time, even if they land on an unoccupied, unfortified hex 200 miles from the nearest enemy – which seems somewhat daft.

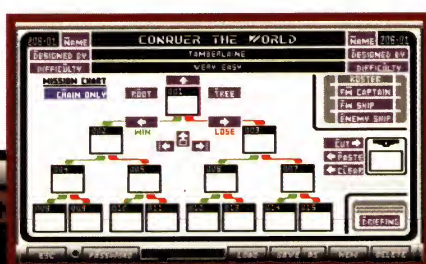
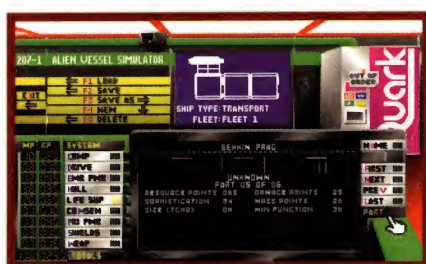
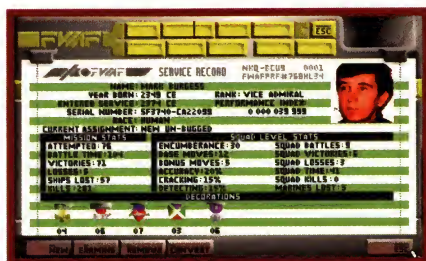
Clash of Steel is still the best effort yet at a computerised simulation of the war in Europe, with good graphics, a neat interface and above average gameplay. To get involved, you have to know why Barbarossa failed and why the Allies didn't land until 1944 – a fact that speaks well for the high level of historical simulation, but not really one to endear it to casual gamers seeking a new thrill. **Z**

Clash Of Steel



Rules of Eng

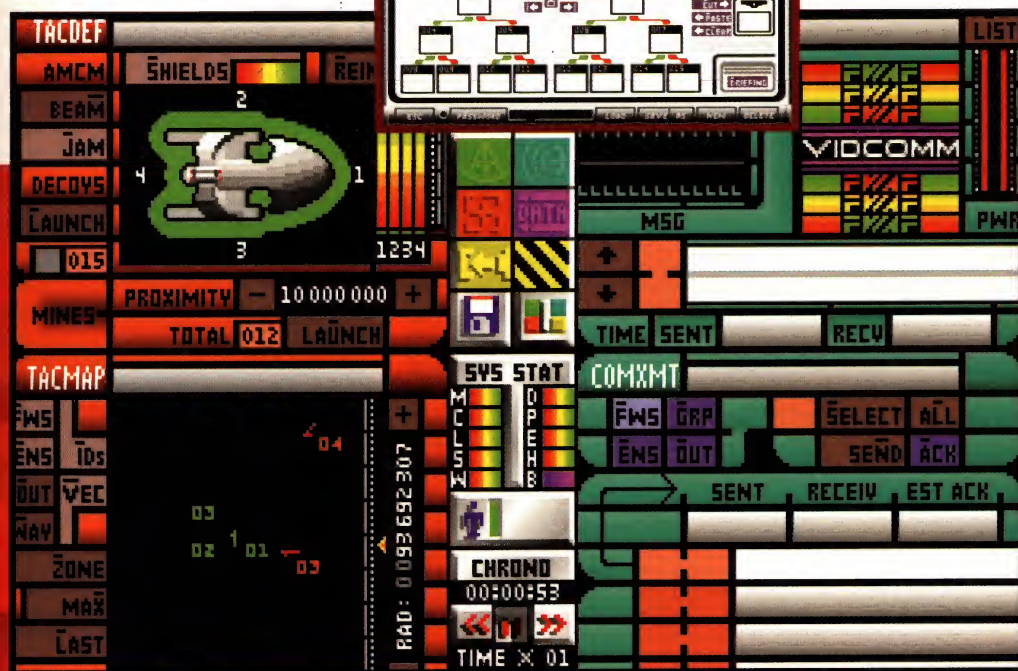
When you have a sprawling space strategy game, there's only one person to review it. But he's gone so **Mark Burgess** got it instead.



(Top right) Service Record, a candid assessment of your performance and a list of your medals.
(Second right) Setting up a mission, note that completed campaigns don't show.
(Third right) Edit ships, alter all the attributes of yours or the enemies'.
(Bottom right) Design missions.
(Circular inset) An FW cruiser.

DOOMSDAY OPERATION

THE STORYBOARD



1 Shields up as Nehkyew Jehk and Yaksur Jehk close in. My two wingmen are just waiting for the word.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2 is a massive, detailed game of strategy. In the 24th century the Federated Worlds and the Union of Democratic Planets are at war. The conflict is taking place over a huge stretch of the galaxy. While the Earthlings are fighting amongst themselves, various alien races are being discovered. Few of them are friendly.

Star travel has been made possible by the discovery, in 2095, of a hyperspace booster. This seems to have been left in the Tau Ceti solar system for man to find but the identity of the 'gatekeepers' who left it there is unknown. *Rules of Engagement 2* is a computer simulation that places you in command of a Federation starship. But you are not alone; there is a rota of 29 other captains and you can choose those suited to particular missions.

The program operates in real time as far as is consistent with playability. The programmer, Thomas Carbone has avoided the flight sim habit of a long boring journey to a fast dog fight. You are often plunged straight into hot water with enemy ships closing fast. This means you need to think quickly to decide tactics and arrange your battle group.

There are three ready made campaigns; Tour of Duty, Doomsday Operation and Ill Wind. The first two are 'medium' and the last is hard, although I found it easier than some bits of Tour of Duty. There is also a mission called Basree Cargo, which is very easy and lets you get accustomed to the controls.

Ah yes, the controls. There is a point and click interface but, just in case you think that makes things easy, there are 26 windows. These control all aspects of your ship and those of your comrades. You will have to decide which four are essential for any one situation. There are four pre-configured selections - you can store your own - and two of the functions (Navigation and Data) have their own 'full' windows.

At the beginning of every mission you must assign ships to waypoints and captains to the ships. In some missions you will have over a dozen ships from a choice of up to 96. Choose the captains carefully. Some are hot-headed and attack enemy ships you may want captured, while others do not respond well to orders. And there are some who have a sneaking regard for the principles of the UDP (commie finks, in other words).

Let's have, as they say, a worked example.



2 Everyone is sent after Nehkyew Jehk; James Chappie acknowledges the order.



3 Here I've set NAVHLM to chase and locked on with TACFIR. Now to choose the missiles.

Engagement 2

DOOMSDAY OPERATION

THE WALKTHROUGH

Mission 1: data acquired

Doomsday Operation brings together several different strands of the game; the hyperspace booster and the various aliens that the humans meet as they use it. The first mission of the campaign is to protect the booster and find out more about the aliens who are in league with the UDP. I decided a destroyer could protect the booster and used the José Rizal. For its captain I chose James Chappie because of his tactical skills and his willingness to carry out orders. I now needed to capture one enemy ship and destroy the other. I decided on two dreadnoughts, the Kung San and the Akio Morita. Chahn Minh, another ace captain, took the Akio Morita and I took command of the flagship.

The first panel I opened when we arrived at the waypoint was TACMAP, the tactical map. It showed that two enemy ships, UDP Desmona Ret and Wiktyan Hesi, were patrolling the waypoint and two others were closing: the Heavy Cruisers Nehkyew

Jehk and Yaksur Jehk. Opening up COMXMT and COMRCV, I ordered everyone to jam enemy communications and then attack the nearest, Nehkyew Jehk. This gave me the vital time needed to go into TACDEF and put up my shields and set missile defences to 'jam'. Moving to TACFIR I put the EBW level up to 75% and pinpointed 'weapons'.

I then opened the COMPWR panel and set my own systems to jam enemy communications. Then I went into NAVHLM, set it to chase the Nehkyew Jehk, closed NAVHLM and set up the display for combat: TACFIR, TACMAP, TACSSEN and TACMAN.

The problem was which ship to capture? UDP Desmona Ret was out as we already knew about the UDP. Wiktyan Hesi looked promising as it was a cruiser and easier to take, as well as having fewer crew to overcome. But it and UDP Desmona Ret were patrolling the waypoint. They could be dealt with later so I decided that all three of us would try and capture the first ship and destroy the second. Then Chappie could go and defend the booster and Chahn Minh and I would try to take out or capture both remaining enemy ships. I was worried that one might self-destruct rather than be captured – after all we knew nothing about these aliens, the Trizan Alphas.

I ordered my colleagues to capture Nehkyew Jehk and I went after Yaksur Jehk which was closing fast. I destroyed it just as I heard that the first had been captured. As Wiktyan Hesi and UDP Desmona Ret were patrolling the waypoint they had to go and with them, I assumed, the threat to the booster. I ordered the others to destroy UDP Desmona Ret while I attempted to capture Wiktyan Hesi. I accidentally blew up Wiktyan Hesi with a lucky missile and so ordered everyone to the waypoint. Chahn Minh peeled off to help the José Rizal which had sustained heavy damage in the attack on UDP Desmona Ret. I followed him and destroyed the enemy ship while the Akio Morita towed José Rizal safely to the waypoint. We all made it. The mission was a success and gave High Command vital intelligence.

Ducks in a barrel

The data from the captured enemy ship gave notice of a Trizan Alpha convoy passing through the Zhison system. The mission is to attack it and capture cargo. The UDP will be there in four hours, so capture as many as you can and get the cargo. You must neutralise (destroy or capture) at least two ships. There are six in the system. For the first Waypoint I assigned Chahn Minh

WATCH IT!

You might wonder how you can keep track of things when you don't have the relevant panel open. If you're in attack mode, how do you know your wingmen are talking to you? The on-board computer will give you regular reports, such as 'message incoming'. If you come under attack while you're planning your next move, you'll hear it alright: the sound of your shields being damaged will make you jump out of your skin. You can save any four panels as a configuration, so that in an emergency two clicks will take you into the full combat set up. The level of Artificial Intelligence in this program is amazing. The aliens will pull feints and mount ambushes. Your fellow captains act as if they had wills of their own. Some will flee if things get too hot, some will get involved in suicidal attacks (and once they're dead, they're dead – they don't come back from the grave for the next mission). Others will just not obey your orders if they think the orders are stupid or if they don't like being told what to do by a whipper-snapper. Choose your captains with even more care than you do your ships.



4 I'm still out of range but Chahn Minh is already causing damage. TACMAP shows who's where.



6 Well done that man. Yellow background on any ID means that the outpost or ship has been captured.



8 Full information on the flight. Note that only the commander (me) has been reckless and damaged his ship.



5 The Nehkyew Jehk is struggling but still manages a missile through my shields.



7 I've split the group up so that half goes to destroy UDP Desmona Ret and the other captures Wiktyan Hesi.



9 TACMAP shows the flight streaming towards its targets. Status indicators on TACFIR shows Wiktyan Hesi in trouble.

IGS

Rules of Engagement 2 is part of the Interlocking Games System. All IGS are capable of working with each other as if they were a single game. For instance, if you are boarding an outpost in *Rules of Engagement 2* and have *Breach 2*, then *Breach 2* is called up for the combat sequence. Actually, the only other IGS game at the moment is *Breach 2*, but *Breach 3* is under development as is a sequel to *Rules of Engagement 2* called *Universe 4*. *Breach* commanders can be converted to *Rules of Engagement* commanders.

to the Dreadnought Akio Morita, Daneal Mabuso and Dren Anderson to the Cruisers Cheongju and Gapiirri, James Chappie to the Destroyer Fws Heng and I took the Dreadnought Fws Chang Jiang. I assigned six destroyers to the second waypoint. (Fws Dante (Francis Globel), Fws Kaga (Ignacio Moreno), Fws Paiute (Anna Quintana), Fws Pan-P'o (Akiri Mustapha) and Fws Pleiades captained by Jacques Quinze.)

It was a fair concentration of firepower and we managed to destroy the outpost Uart and capture the outpost Hammon Dar as well as accomplishing all mission objectives.

Anderson), one cruiser (Fws José Rizal piloted by Chahn Minh) and a Dreadnought, fws Lion Star captained by myself.

Alien probe at Hope

This is a simple 'Kill All Aliens' mission. There are four enemy ships. The three waypoints hold 950, 780 and 940 resource points. I used three destroyers with Dren Anderson, Daneal Mabuso and Anna Quantina and two Heavy Cruisers with James Chappie and myself.

Hit pyxis

You have to capture an outpost and 300 units of cargo. 'Cargo' you might think; 'I'd better use a Transporter'. But remember that Dreadnoughts can carry 210 units. I managed to get far more cargo than asked for and got myself a promotion.

Convoy attack

Attack an alien convoy near Toascella. Use lots of Heavy Cruisers and Cruisers. There are four enemy ships to neutralise - you should have two fws for each. Tell everyone to capture rather than destroy the ships - you need the cargo. Watch out for the Enbranson Field which will scramble your sensors.

Ambush alien command

More mayhem in the Hope system. I took the Heavy Cruiser Braye, Dren Anderson took the Cruiser Gapiirri, the destroyers Guarantor and K'uei completed the flight.

The final battle

The enemy throw all they have into one last battle. You have to capture two ships, but the rest can be destroyed. I used the Cruisers Frederick and Gapiirri (Daneal Mabuso & Akiri Mustapha), the Heavy Cruisers Braye and Edwards (MB & Dren Anderson), the Destroyer Dante (James Chappie) and the Dreadnought K'uei (Francis Globel).

After you have defeated the Xenos Agnos in Doomsday Operation it is on to the next campaign, Ill Wind. The fw and udp are back together, united against the common foe. Now you can use those captains with udp sympathies. Ill Wind probes the new enemy, the Trizan Alphas.

When you have finished a campaign, a password allows you to edit just about every aspect of it. That is only the beginning. *Rules of Engagement 2* allows you to create your own missions and link them into tee-linked campaigns with win/lose conditions. You can alter 18 different personality traits to create your own captains or aliens. Then go on to building ships and, if you want, even entire solar systems. The possibilities are endless.

I never thought I'd really like a strategy game pure and simple. I've got a short attention span and unless a game grabs my attention in the first 20 minutes or so, it's lost. But I think *Rules of Engagement 2* will convert any shoot 'em-up fan into a strategy game player. I liked it so much I nearly bought some 12-sided dice. **Z**

IN PERSPECTIVE

Space Hulk and Star Control 2 have more action but *Rules of Engagement 2* is in a different league strategy-wise.

Rules Of Engagement

Space Hulk

Syndicate

Protostar

Star Control 2

Encounter at Godel

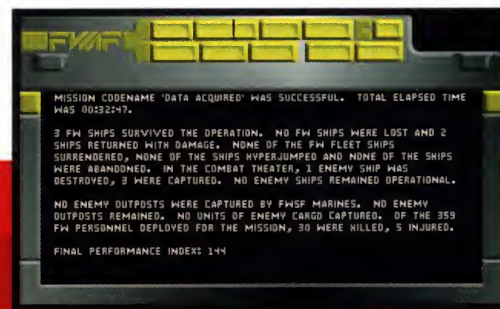
With a time limit of three hours, you must neutralise two enemy ships and get all ships to waypoint x04. The original object, of capturing outpost r03, has been abandoned, but try it anyway. You should find time. If you do capture the outpost, you will get the Probe of Hope. I managed to do it (and destroy all four enemy ships) using four destroyers (Fws Kaga (Daneal Mabuso), Fws Paiute (Francis Globel), fws Jouett (James Chappie) and fws Okinawa piloted by Dren



10 Desmona Ret is destroyed; SYS STAT shows my ComSen and Drive are damaged but are being repaired.



12 Ordering the flight to Waypoint X02. I'm going to get them all home.



14 A final de-briefing. Your rank increases with your score; a cumulative score of 41,000 gets you made Admiral.



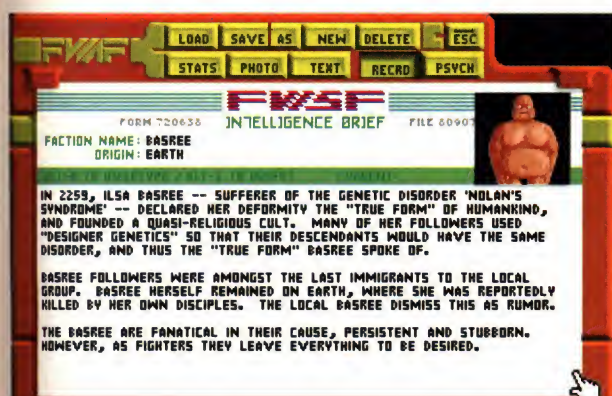
11 A quick check shows that Wikty Hesi has been captured. FW José Rizal is damaged and drifting.



13 Mission accomplished; All ships at the Waypoint.



15 The next mission: Ducks in a barrel. A lot of ships to deploy (FW ships green, enemy ships red).



Aliens: there are 23 types and the ability to create as many as you want.

PCZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K Free RAM

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 16MHz

Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk: 8Mb Free

Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland, Pro Audio Spectrum

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse.

(Mouse recommended)

Comments: DOS 3.0 or higher

PCZONE score

A game of great depth and complexity.

91

Price: £44.99 **Out:** August

Publisher: Impressions

Telephone: 071 351 2133

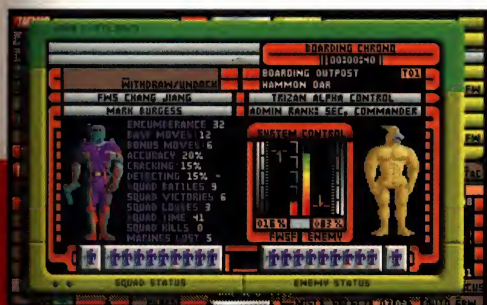
Tactics

ATTACKED BY TWO OR MORE ENEMIES: Go from one to the other, shooting out weapons systems. Then Drive, Shield and Hull to destroy.

SURROUNDED!: Use EMERCON and press 'Assist'. There is one mission in Tour of Duty where the flagship is immediately attacked by every enemy ship. Call for assistance as soon as you arrive. Then you collect your thoughts and start giving orders.

SURROUNDED AND ALONE!: This happens. 'Evade' is not much good. Better to manually swing round the helm and push the velocity into the red. Once 3,000,000km from the nearest enemy, head for the closest asteroid field for repairs.

DESTROYING AN OUTPOST WITHOUT MISSILES: This happened to me in Deep Space Recon (Tour of Duty) when I'd used all my missiles in a tight clinch with six enemy vessels. Position to about 3,000,000 km from the station, then set EBW on 'Shields' and auto. Use position to come up behind the station at a range of 500,000km. TACMAP will show when the station fires something at you. When that happens swing 90 degrees. You should dodge most of the stuff that's thrown at you and decoys will help with the rest.



16 I've boarded the enemy outpost Hammon Dar. Although it's not part of the mission, it's worth extra points.



18 Another mission successfully accomplished. My secret? Teamwork.



17 Coming in close to take cargo from Fa'rog Pekt; you need to be within 500km.



19 TACSSEN displays the status of your missiles. The Franklin Lab FEs are anti-personnel.

THOSE SCREENS IN FULL

Comms

COMRCV Receives communications either one message at a time in video mode, or as a list of up to five messages.
COMXMT Send orders, issue challenges and request docking rights. You can select individual ships or outposts or send general orders to all enemy or friendly ships.
COMPWR Sets the strength of signals and monitors interference. You can also jam communications from here.

complete the mission, or if you are about to be destroyed by enemy ships.
EMRCOM Ask for help, a tow or crew evacuation.
EMRTHR Emergency thrusters; if your drive has been shot out and no one is able to tow you, these are your only hope.
EMRPAN If you've sustained a lot of damage, this shows you which panels are working and which aren't.

Navigation

NAVMAP A map where you can plan strategy and set the helm. It can show all the features of the system you're flying through.
NAVHLM This allows you to set various autopilot (Chase, Intercept) manoeuvres or to fly the ship manually. Special controls for stealth and hyperspace.
NAVSEN Gather information on objects and vessels by using a probe or by launching drones.
FULNAV This is the combined panel that pulls together all the functions of the various navigation panels.

Information

DATFLT Information on all the ships in the fleet.
DATSHIP Full information about individual ships.
DATDKT Information on your captains and enemies.
DATOBJ Mission objectives.
DATSET Configure panels and other game options.
DATEVA Evaluation - how well you're doing, what's happened.
FULDAT The combined data panel.

Docking and repair

DRPREP Repair systems, assign work teams to various parts of your ship.
DRPTOW Lets you use your tractor beam to tow an FWS ship.
DRPDOK Dock at outposts and resupply and repair.
DROCGO Transfer cargo between your ship and other vessels or locations.

Tactical Panels

TACFIR Targeting and lock on controls. Selection and firing of EBW and missiles.
TACMAP Combat map.
TACMAN Manoeuvres and tactics.
TACSSEN Identity and state of the target and any missiles you've fired. Warns of incoming weapons and their source.
TACDEF Defensive systems; launch decoys and mines, raise and lower shields, jam or destroy incoming missiles.

Emergency systems

EMRTRN Crew evacuation by escape pod or teleporter.
EMRDES Self-destruct; the suicide option. You use it if you can not

Upgrades...

Up On Move

**I say I say I say.
When is a new game
not a new game?
I don't know.
When is a new game
not a new game?
When it's an
upgrade. (Sound of
hysterical laughter.
Audience bursts into
spontaneous
applause and, in two
cases, spontaneous
combustion.)**



NOTHING LASTS FOREVER they say, but the software industry seems to be trying to prove the old adage wrong by giving renewed life to old games. Once upon a time, a game's history was simple: full price release, budget release and then, if the game was popular enough, sequel. This was far too simple to last. In the following pages you'll find reviews of games that are not new and yet are not old either. Ladies and Gentlemen, you have now entered the upgrade zone.

The different ways of adding life to a game seem to break down into three categories. Firstly there's the data disk, an add-on product which requires ownership of the original game and gives extra missions, planes and so on. This is a tried and tested formula and hardly new. There are data disks available for classics such as *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (new planes), *Red Baron* (a mission editor) and *Harpoon* (new scenarios and databases). Often distributed on the data disks is an 'upgrade' to the original game — usually more accurately described as a 'bug fix', although many upgrades carried on data disks add a whole new raft of features to the original game. The Islands and Ice data disk for *Gunship 2000*, for example, carries an upgrade that fixes all the bugs and adds support for two joysticks — a feature that wasn't in the original game.

A more recent development is the 'Deluxe' edition. A complete game in its own right, the 'Deluxe' version is simply a revised edition of an old favourite. It may have data disk elements but usually features improved sound and graphics.

Nevertheless, in essence it's the original game. There have been a number of recent releases that fall into this category and there are still more on the cards. We review *Railroad Tycoon Deluxe* and *Caesar Deluxe* in this feature, but watch out for upcoming titles like *Front Page Sports Football Pro* from Dynamix and *Wayne Gretzky Deluxe* from Bethesda. Look up a few revised versions of old favourites too: Sierra have revamped many titles (such as *Leisure Suit Larry*), as have other companies including us Gold with the likes of *Empire Deluxe*.

The third category of upgrade is the most unusual of all. Although they are complete games in their own right, they are so close to the original game in structure they are more of a 'supplement' than a 'sequel'. *Pirates Gold!* and *Wing Commander Academy* are reviewed here: they both combine features of the games they're based upon with new angles. The key point here that differentiates these games from the 'Deluxe' category of upgrades is that owners of the game which they are supposedly a sequel to are charged full price. I suppose there are any number of sequels which really could be described as being 'the same as the original game plus a few supplements', but are sold as full price games in their own right. Domark's *Mig-29M Super Fulcrum* was much the same as *Mig-29 Fulcrum*; a new flight model and missions but broadly speaking the same game. Many series of games verge on being in this category — many wargames which could be released as data disks actually go out as full games with the same game engine (progressively more and more bug free) each time. The *V For Victory* series is an example of this practice.

DATA DISK OR FULL PRICE GAME?

'To release it as a data disk or not to release it as a data disk. That is the question.' TIM PONTING, *PC Zone*, 1993, AFTER WM. SHAKESPEARE, *HAMLET*, 1601-ISH.

Put yourself in the shoes of a game developer. You've just programmed a sequel to a successful RPG. It's a new scenario (new maps, spells etc.). The game engine you're using is functionally identical to the original game; there's a few bugs you'd like to fix and you want to alter a few options.

You have two choices. Either release it as a full price sequel in its own right, or put a data disk together which upgrades the original game and gives access to the 'new' scenario. The former is great for new users who haven't got the original game, the latter better for the loyal fan who wants a new adventure for his characters. From the publisher's point of view, if the sequel has better gameplay than the original, it's probably an advantage to release it as a new product entirely – that way it avoids being tarred with the same brush as the flawed original.

Financially, there are pros and cons to both approaches. For the publisher, giving the punter the opportunity to only buy the sequel may reduce sales of the original; on the other hand he will receive full price game revenue from those who buy both. The data disk approach guarantees that every data disk sale will be matched by a sale of the original game, and the cheaper pricepoint could stimulate loyalty from owners of the first game and increase the likelihood of them buying the data disks. On the other hand, new buyers may be put off the series since they would have to buy an 'old' game to play the 'new' one. From the buyer's point of view the data disk is better for people who own the first game and the full-price sequel approach gives more choice for new players.

Keith Zabalaoui is the President of Atomic Games, the developer of the classic wargame series *V For Victory*, and has been through the decision making process of data disk versus new product: '*V for Victory* was originally going to follow the data disk approach as used in *Harpoon*. But when we got to *V For Victory 2*, we had so many upgrades to make that the data disk approach was impractical. As you say, the approach we have taken is better for new players: there's no overhead, having to buy the first in the series before getting the one you really want. As for the repeat buyer, the publisher offers a discount to the registered users. We're very concerned to look after our customers – and give them the most bang for their buck!'

FREE UPGRADES

Don't forget that the best upgrade you can get is a free one. Not only are bug fixes available at cost price or for free (see *VersionWatch* in the *Bulletin* pages) but very often free upgrades add new features to the game. *Formula One Grand Prix* had an upgrade that allowed head to head connection via modem; *Gunship 2000*'s free upgrade offered two joystick support and so on. When you buy any game, keep your eyes peeled – there may be an upgrade that gives it a new lease of life for absolutely zilch investment...

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

THE GAMES REVIEWED in this feature are rated on their own merits either as stand alone games (e.g. *Railroad Tycoon Deluxe*) or as add-ons for those who already have the original (e.g. *Imperial Pursuit*). Here we rate these games and others in terms of their comparative value for money, in other words, are they a bargain upgrade or are they a rip-off? The ultimate rip-off scores one out of ten, the best imaginable upgrade ten out of ten.

Remember, some of these 'upgrades' are nominally new games in their own right, for example *Pirates Gold!*, *Mig-29M* and *Wing Commander Academy*.

| 'Upgrade' | Value For Money |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Gunship 2000 Islands & Ice | 9 New terrain, great mission editor, new challenges. The benchmark u/g. |
| Pirates Gold! | 2 Full-price. No cheap u/g from the original, too similar. |
| Railroad Tycoon Deluxe | 4 Cheap u/g from original. New regions. |
| Imperial Pursuit | 4 Just one Tour Of Duty. Wait for B-Wing? |
| Wing Commander Academy | 6 Nothing new, but good mission editor opens up plenty of gameplay. |
| Mig-29M Super Fulcrum | 2 Mig-29 with knobs on. Not a lot more. |
| Unlimited Adventures | 8 See Bard's Tale Construction Kit. |
| Bard's Tale Construction Kit | 6 If this kind of thing's your bag, it's good value. |
| SWOTL data disks | 3 Just new planes, could have been so much more. |
| Aces of the Pacific 1946 | 7 Highly regarded additional challenges. |
| Red Baron Mission Builder | 6 Mission builder plus other extras. |
| Great Naval Battles data disks | 4 More of the same.* |
| Harpoon Designers Series | 6 Better scenarios than the original game! |
| Comanche data disks | 4 More data, more hard disk space, slightly more fun. |
| UMS II Planet Editor | 6 Difficult to get excited about but good for UMS heads. |
| Sim City graphics sets | 2 New pictures that don't fit the game terribly well. |
| Sim City Terrain Editor | 3 You'll want to write your name in a pattern of lakes. Once. |
| Populous Promised Lands | 3 Superficial data disk. |
| Mig-29 for Falcon 3.0 | 7 Grows on F3 jocks as time goes on. Could almost have been released as a new game. |
| Ultima: Serpent Isle | 6 Same as U7... just a new story. |

*0/10 for the scenario disk that has the Brits on the Other Side. Pah!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If you've bought an upgrade – either a full price 'sequel' that's not much different to the original, a data disk or 'Deluxe' version, and have something to say about it, write to Paul Lakin, the Editor, at *PC Zone*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. We'd like to hear what you think.

The Data Disks

MIG 29



'If you're a total 100% Falcon 3.0 nut, then yes, the Mig 29 upgrade is very probably worth your money.'

(Top right) One of those external views without which no flight sim would be complete (also a good way to disguise the fact that Duncan's already been shot down).

(Above right) That essential map containing vital information such as the location of the nearest Happy Eater (Yellow Circle).

(Below) That sophisticated Mig interior in full. Soothing for those with dialphobia.

SPOOK ALERT! SPOOK ALERT! Before installing *Mig 29* into my *Falcon 3.0* folder, I had a really old version of *Falcon 3.0* on my drive. After the installation had finished I not only had the new all singing all dancing *Mig 29* program ready and waiting to be fired up (you type *Mig 29* instead of *Falcon 3.0*), but my copy of *Falcon 3.0* had been updated to version 3.02 as well. This updating business may well be the easiest thing in the world to do as far as a programmer is concerned, but from where I'm sitting (in Laymansville) it smells of black magic.

Anyway enough of that and onto what you actually get out of *Mig 29*, apart from having cobwebby old *Falcon 3* automatically updated. Well, for a start you get a new intro sequence which is longer and better than *Falcon 3.0*'s and with loads of new samples. Then, of course, it's into the game itself, where you soon realise that, while *Mig 29* is different from *Falcon 3.0*, it's actually still much the same – just re-rendered option screens (pretty gaudy), new option screen muzak, the new plane, new (but similar) weapons and new missions. Nothing wrong with that though: after all, this is an upgrade, not a stand-alone.

So what does the *Mig 29* aircraft feel like to fly after the *Falcon*? Er, it's a bit of a pig as it happens – and I can now appreciate (if the realistic flight model is realistic, and not just an idle Spectrum Holobyte boast) how those two *Mig 29*s collided at the Farnborough airshow. So much for the flying then; but what of the *Mig 29* instrument panel? Bloody ugly to be honest with you. If a *Falcon* pilot and a *Mig 29* pilot relied on the appeal of their cockpit interiors to pick up chicks, the *Falcon* pilot would score first every time. So what more can I tell you? After all, to be able to play this you're going to be a *Falcon 3.0* owner – and if you're a *Falcon 3.0* owner then you'll know exactly how it plays. And as *Mig 29* is essentially the same (apart from the fact that your wingmen speak with Russian accents... 'I heff him in a lock', 'I em breakink to ze left', 'I heff run out off potatoes' and so on), you'll be in for no surprises – once you've got to grips with the new instrument layout and weapons, of course. This may sound a trifle unfair, and maybe even churlish, but I'd be far more eager to sing the



praises of *Mig 29* if I wasn't completely hooked on Digital Integration's ever-so-slightly flawed but ultimately fab *Tornado*. The problem is that the *Falcon 3.0* engine (which *Mig 29* uses), although good for arcadey action and explosion stuff, simply doesn't include enough ground detail – not by September 1993 standards. I've been spoiled, I suppose, by low level ground attacks. In summing up I'll have to do the old cop-out routine, which is to say that if you're a total 100% *Falcon 3.0* nut, then yes, the *Mig 29* upgrade is very probably worth your money. (Or you'll think so, anyway.) For my money, however, I'd say that (a) the *Mig 29* upgrade has cropped up a trifle late in the day to be particularly valid and (b) it's an attempt to squeeze the last few drops of milk out of a game that's been milked enough already. It's time to move on. Duncan McDonald.

An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

SCORE

75

specs

**Minimum Memory: 517K
Minimum Processor: 286**

Minimum Speed: 16MHz Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb extra

Minimum Graphics: VGA Only Sound Cards

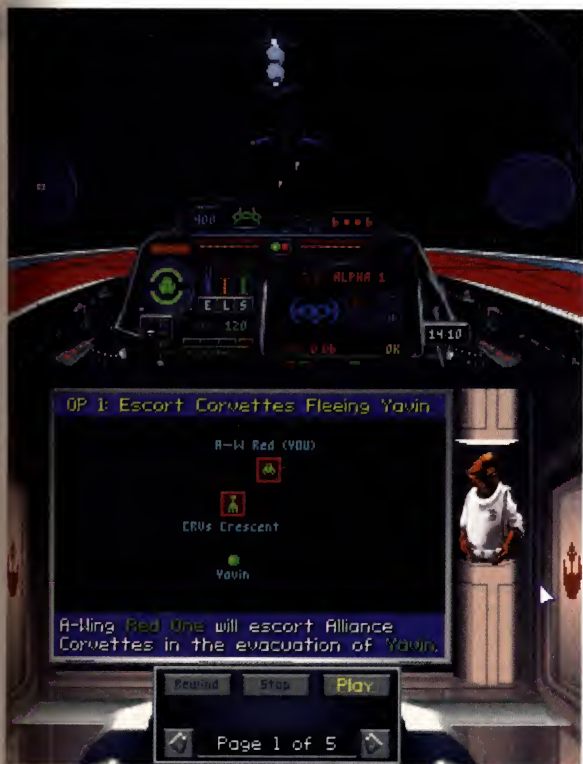
Supported: Roland, Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster

Controls: Keyboard, Joystick Needs: Falcon 3.0

Price: £19.99 Out: Now Publisher: MicroProse Telephone: 0666 504326



IMPERIAL PURSUIT



A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, in a galaxy far, far away, there was a group of rebels who believed that space combat games would never be done well on the PC. This legendary hot-potch of ordinary folk, accountants, and games reviewers were nick-named 'The People Who Had Played *Wing Commander*'. They spread their desire for a fast action-based sci-fi shoot 'em-up across the galaxy, but were thwarted by the 8MHz EGA flagships of the Empire. But then came a new hope – *X-Wing*, a breath of nostalgia for those reared on a diet of Luke, Han, Chewie, Princess 'Brown Croissant Hair' Leia, and, er, Mr Vader, Sir. Its arrival brought cries of 'Woah! 16 Tie bombers at ten o'clock and I've only got one concussion missile left' and, 'I wonder if I can take out this Star Destroyer- bzzzzzzttt!' and introduced a new vocabulary of words like 'Maze-levels', 'Historic Missions' and 'There's the rebel'. It made *Elite* look like a piece of orange peel and *Wing Commander* a nectarine with a hole in it.

Now comes *Imperial Pursuit*, a new tour of duty with a full 24 more missions for those who have kissed the Death Star's 'bottom' good-bye. The plot runs as follows: The Empire, suitably miffed by the loss of its 100 billion space dollar Death Star investment and the disappearance of Lord Vader, have launched a ferocious counter-attack on the rebels, attacking their base on Yavin and forcing them to flee. You, a veteran of the three previous campaigns (you're given an *X-Wing* top-ace pilot with the game), are enlisted to protect the beleaguered fleet and assist in the search for a new base (i.e. Hoth).

Aesthetically, the game looks the same. The spaceport looks as glossy as ever, the historic missions are intact, and that annoying droid still barks: 'You may proceed', but the briefing room has a subtle addition – mission tips. After the usual text info, you can opt for some in depth tactics and hidden hints to aid you in your quest.

The missions are well-paced and start off easy but long. The first few are the hardest. They're 'protection missions', and they're hard because you have to exercise vast self-control. Your nerves scream out to you: 'Go get the gunboats! Take them out!' but you have to hang back and protect the defenceless civilians. 'Sod the civvies!' you scream, 'I wanna kill everything!' But you can't. You have to keep everything under control, you have to plan, you have to economise your missiles, you have to think.

The opposition starts off a little weedy – not using their missiles and flying straight at you with no shields – but as the missions spiral into deadly ambushes, mega mine fields, and Star Destroyers abungo, the interceptors get cleverer, the Ties slippery-ier, and the advanced Ties make guest appearances. For the unscared, the advanced Ties have shields, missiles and top ace ninja pilots – they're very tough. Some new, neat cut-scenes interlude the mission (only four and not as good as the original ones) and, overall, this tour of duty has a polished feel but... the guarding and protection mission, although needing bags of skill, tends to become boring and repetitive, and there's no 'I've got to reach the Death Star' type incentive to inspire you. However, for the price, it all adds up as a tasty snack before the Battle At Hoth mega-dinner makes its appearance. *David McCandless.*

Long, involving 'story-driven' tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.



SCORE

80

specs

Minimum Memory: 517K

Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 20MHz Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb extra

Minimum Graphics: VGA Sound Cards

Supported: All major sound cards Controls:

Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick Needs: X-Wing

Price: £19.99 Out: Now Publisher: LucasArts/US Gold Telephone: 021 625 3388



(Top left) As you approach the Corvettes you see a Tie Bomber. (Left) You remember your briefing: this is an escort mission not glory hunting chase and destroy. (Below) Stuff that for a game of toy soldiers. It's glory you want so you launch a suicide attack on a Frigate.



WIN A REBEL UNIFORM!

You can't play *Imperial Pursuit** if you don't look the part, so we've teamed up with US Gold to offer five lucky, plucky readers the chance to own a swanky black polo shirt with discrete *X-Wing* logo. To get yourself this piece of highly regarded garb, simply answer this far-from-taxing question below:

Han Solo won his ship, the Millennium Falcon, from an old friend. Was it:

(a) Chewbacca?

(b) Lando Calrissian?

(c) Obi Wan Kenobi?

Write your answer on the back of a postcard or a sealed envelope (along with your name and address, if you actually want your prize to get sent to you), and send it to MTFWY, *PC Zone*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1V 7HJ. Entries to arrive by 8 October 1993 (give or take a few light years).

The Deluxe Games

RAILROAD TYCOON DELUXE

FIRST THINGS FIRST. *Railroad Tycoon* is one of the great games, one of those classics that other games are rated against. In its genre it's up there with *Sim City* and *Civilization* as the essential buys. Now it's got even better. That's the theory anyway.

The plot of *Railroad Tycoon* is neatly summarised in its title (which is unsurprising I guess). You aim to be the Rupert Murdoch of the rail network. This involves not only building railway lines and buying trains and rolling stock to run on them, but also investing in stocks and shares and trying to buy into your rival companies until the word 'competition' is just a distant memory.

That's the original game. What does the Deluxe version offer? Well essentially it's the same game only more of it. The graphics have been tarted up, (i.e. VGA) but then although quite – dare I say it – sweet, the graphics were never a major selling point of the game and to be honest, I wasn't bowled over backwards by the changes.

More importantly, there are new continents to develop (South America, Africa and Europe) and 11 new trains, giving you a total of 32 to choose from. All this adds to the options and variety of the game but not exactly by an earth-shattering amount.

Railroad Tycoon is one of the must buy games, so if it is still not in your collection then *Railroad Tycoon Deluxe* ought to be on your shopping list. However, for an owner of the original, this is basically a data disk (a fact tacitly acknowledged by MicroProse which is offering to upgrade original games to Deluxe versions for £19.99). But even if treated as a data disk *Railroad Tycoon Deluxe* doesn't offer quite enough, even at the less than £20.00 price bracket. *Paul Lakin.*

Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

SCORE
72

specs Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 16MHz Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 5Mb Minimum
Graphics: VGA Sound Cards Supported: Roland,
Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, ProAudio, Spectrum and
Covox Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £39.99* Out: Now Publisher: MicroProse Telephone: 0666 504326

*£19.99 if you have the original



(Top) *Railroad Tycoon Deluxe*. For any back bench Conservative MPs reading this magazine (And there's bound to be a lot of them) the unfamiliar shape in this picture is known as Europe. (Above) And for any representatives of British Rail who happen to be browsing through the pages the unfamiliar activity being displayed here is called 'Building a new railway line.'

(Below) *Caesar Deluxe*. The beautiful Roman lakeside town of Lakinus with thriving industry, bustling markets and only the merest hint of urban decay. Certainly nothing to worry a happy-go-lucky dictator. (Bottom) Oh dear. That's what comes of getting cowboy builders in. Especially 1800 years before the first cowboy.





CAESAR DELUXE

'SIM CITY WITH togas' is probably the neatest way of describing *Caesar*. (Well I'm pretty pleased with it anyway, though I expect someone's used it before). The game involves you developing your Roman Province (and specifically your capital city) by building roads, industry, housing etc., keeping the population happy and warding off the attentions of unruly barbarians.

Keeping your province running successfully is a matter of balancing unpopular taxation against the need for investment and allocating limited resources as productively as possible. Like I said: *Sim City* with Togas.

As well as improved graphics and a bigger box, what *Caesar Deluxe* offers us here is some improved AI, plus some on-line help and the ability to cancel road or pipe building half way through - rather like changing your mind mid way through a move in chess. There have also been changes at the Forum (where you go to seek information on your province) with the introduction of an industrial adviser to let you know which industries are suited to your province. This makes things a tad easier.

As a game in its own right, *Caesar* was reasonably good fun, though it read rather better than it played. As a *Deluxe* it is really too similar to the original. As with *Railroad Tycoon*, the owners of *Caesar* can upgrade (for £14.99), but there really doesn't seem to be enough difference to justify that outlay. *Caesar Deluxe* is not £15.00 better than *Caesar*.

A closing observation. One rather curious change in *Caesar* involves the Forum. In the original version there is a slave representative who is black. In the *Deluxe* version the slave has been replaced by a Plebeian, who is white. I make no comment. Paul Lakin.

**More user friendly than its predecessor
but the game remains the same.**

SCORE
70

Specs Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: Not specified Installation:
Essential Minimum Hard Disk Space: 3-4Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA Sound Cards
Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £34.99* Out: Now Publisher: Impressions Telephone: 071 351 2133

*£14.99 if you have the original

ARCHER MACLEAN'S POOL

256 COLOUR VERSION

NOW HERE's a tricky one. What can I say about this that I haven't said already in issue two's review. Very little really, so if you're unfamiliar with Mr Maclean's near legendary work on the computerised green baize then you'll have to buy a back issue.

Basically *Archer Maclean's Pool* is a rewrite of the highly successful *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, which set new standards for snooker sims. The pool version is as good, except it's pool. The 256 version is as good only it's in 256 colours (i.e. SVGA). To all intents and purposes this means clearer, more attractive graphics, the balls have more shine and reflection and the cue has a more mottled wooden look (though the same cannot be said of the edge of the table). The only slight criticism is that the numbers on the balls still constantly face the player. This may make the game easier to follow but gives the impression that the ball is sliding not rolling.

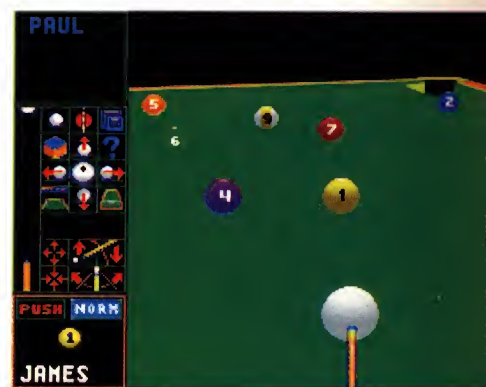
However, this is only a small personal bug bear. *Archer Maclean's Pool* is still the best pool game around, and this is a better looking version, though no one's going to pretend that owners of the original should replace it. This is strictly for the uninitiated. Paul Lakin.

**Exactly what it claims to be - the same
game with more colours. Score
assumes you don't have the original.**

SCORE
88

Specs Minimum Memory: 517K
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 20MHz Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb extra
Minimum Graphics: VGA Sound Cards
Supported: Ad-Lib, Roland, Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £30.99 Out: Now Publisher: Virgin Telephone: 081 960 2255



This picture shows you the glorious colour of Pool, sadly it doesn't show you the glorious ineptitude of Paul's ensuing performance.

**'...no one's
going to
pretend that
owners of the
original should
replace it.'**

The New Games

PIRATES GOLD!



'If you've never played Pirates and the idea of a highly playable high seas adventure appeals to you, then buy Pirates Gold!, it's fun.'

I CAN REMEMBER the exact moment I became interested in the romance and adventure of the pirate world. It was the first time I listened to my *Crackerjack* record on which comic genius Don Maclean sang: 'Fifteen men on a dead man's chest/Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum/Dirty great footprints all up his chest/Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum'.

British comedy never again touched such dizzying heights. Inspired by this lyrical masterpiece I grew a beard (no small achievement for a seven year old) stuck fireworks into it and adopted the name Captain Firebrand. By the time the scars had healed over, and I was released from hospital, MicroProse's *Pirates* was on the scene.

Rather like football, *Pirates* was a funny old game. It was, to say the least, graphically uninspiring even for the time and it didn't really have any great depth of gameplay, you simply sailed the Caribbean looting ships and cities, hunting for

buried treasure, toadying to governors and trying to marry their daughters. (Nice work if you can get it.) Yet despite being relatively simplistic the game was very addictive, had an atmosphere and romance that was appealing and, above all, it was good fun. I was not the only one thoroughly hooked on it.

However that's enough reminiscences. For those of you who've played the original *Pirates* what follows is going to be pretty much old hat so either go out and make yourself a cup of coffee until I've finished or skip straight to the last paragraph and the 'How is *Pirates Gold!* different to *Pirates*' bit. The rest of you concentrate; I'll be asking questions later.

Prepare to sail

The numerous options at the beginning of *Pirates Gold!* mean that there are many ways to play the game. Strictly speaking the difficulty level is chosen when you elect to be either an

(Opposite; clockwise from top left) (a) *Pirates* shows off its swanky VGA colours in loading screen. (b) The oh so useful map with everything the ambitious pirate needs to know about the Caribbean. (c) The screen you'll see most of, your ship, land and a lot of blue. (d) Whether at sea or on land all man to man combat is settled in this way.



apprentice, journeyman, adventurer or swashbuckler. This decision affects not only how tough your opponents are but also how unruly or restive your own crew are. (Oh yes, buccaneering isn't all swords and cannons: the successful captain needs to be well versed in interpersonal management skills too.) However, the game is also influenced by the nationality you choose to play and, more significantly, the era you choose. These range from The Silver Empire (1560) to Pirate's Sunset (1680). Each different time period throws up its own problems affected by the relative strengths of the different empires. For instance, when Spain is completely dominant there are rich pickings but it's difficult to unload them (Spanish towns tend to be reluctant to trade with pirates). In the more shattered times the pickings are less but trading is easier.

A life on the ocean wave

Once you've set up the options it's time to take to the high seas. From then on a ship's log might go something like this:

Attack Spanish Galleon – plunder her and then put a prize crew aboard.

Attack Spanish Sloop – plunder her and then put a prize crew aboard.

See Spanish Frigate – run like jiggery.

Arrive in St Kitts – visit Governor, receive land grant and title, talk pleasantly (in a rough gruff seamanly kind of way) to his daughter. Visit merchant and sell plunder. Go into tavern, buy section of treasure map from traveller, recruit 18 ruffians into my crew. Leave town.

Attack Dutch Sloop – plunder her and then put a prize crew aboard.

Raid Martinique – loot town, install new Governor.

Attacked by Captain Vahn Rhynn the pirate – sink his ship with cannon fire, sloop suffers loss of mast.

Raid Santo Domingo – beaten off, the galleon runs aground.

The game carries on pretty much like that. As you progress you get various missions on behalf of Governors, plus missions on your own behalf to find buried treasure, the silver train and even your kidnapped sister.

As well as winning battles you must also manage your crew. This involves keeping them happy by regularly distributing the loot and giving them plenty of action. Apart from crew management and seamanship (stop smirking at the back) the skill in playing *Pirates* is in knowing when to fight and when to leave well alone. You can't rush around attacking everyone since, if all nations turn against you, there's no one to trade

with. Moreover there are favours to be won by siding with one nation against its enemies. The final skill is knowing when to give up.

Old pirates never die they simply retire and open wine bars (where they bore the clientele sick with their reminiscences of their youthful exploits). Death is not an option in *Pirates Gold!*, defeat simply ends in capture and a few months sitting in prison. However, as the game progresses, you get older, less healthy and less able to do what was once so easy. As soon as those twinges of age became noticeable it's time to retire; at which point the game then calculates your future based on your financial and physical state at the time of retirement.

Plus ça change

To be honest when I started writing this review I was going to give *Pirates Gold!* a bit of an old slugging. Not for what it is but for what it isn't: it isn't very different from *Pirates*. The graphics are better but they're hardly ground-breaking, the swordfighting has been improved with more offensive and defensive moves but they're no *Prince of Persia*. In one way the game has been somewhat spoilt. Navigation in the original *Pirates* was carried out by way of a map and an astrolabe. To find out where you were you had to either find a city or take a sun reading. In *Pirates Gold* there is a map in the Captain's cabin which constantly shows your position. Half the fun of *Pirates* was being completely lost on the high seas.

However as I write the review all the fun of the game comes back to me. If you've never played *Pirates* and the idea of a highly playable high seas adventure appeals to you then buy *Pirates Gold!*, it's great fun. If, however, you've already got *Pirates* then I'm not so sure. Do you really want the same game twice? Paul Lakin.

As good as the original. Unfortunately it almost is the original.

SCORE

75

specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb

Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 16MHz Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 18Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA Sound Cards

Supported: All major soundcards

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse (Recommended)

Price: £44.99 Out: Now Publisher: MicroProse Telephone: 0666 504326



SHIP AHOY

There are two basic forms of combat in *Pirates Gold!*. Ship to ship gun battles and captain to captain swordfights. Oh, and Ship to town battles. So there are three basic forms of combat in *Pirates Gold!* plus land battles. Four basic forms of combat.

Ship to ship

Whenever you run into a ship and decide to do battle then it's a case of manoeuvre and fire. However many ships you have in your fleet you can only select one with which to actually fight. You can sink your opponent (or else force him to surrender), however, it's also a useful way of reducing the odds before ramming and boarding.

Swords at dawn

The most common way of deciding a dispute over ownership of a ship, city or sister is by duelling. The result of the battle is influenced not only by your own fencing skills, but by the numeric strength of your crew. If your crew are overwhelmed before you have defeated the opposing captain then you're in the clink however well you are doing personally.

Ship to shore

Before landing and doing battle with a town's captain (see above) there's a considerable degree of softening up to indulge in. The problem with this method of attack is that more often than not you're sailing into the wind, so your approach to the fort is slow. We're talking sitting duck here.

Land war

The least frequent method of combat. More often than not if you land too far from a town, your crew will sit on their fat backsides and refuse to budge. However, if you do approach a city overland then there'll be a rare old ding dong involving pike and musket. This is the nearest combat in *Pirates Gold!* gets to being strategic, it's still fairly simplistic though.

The New Games

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY



'Wing Commander Academy is really only a must for those breast-fed on Wing Commander in the PC's youth.'

(Below) Oh for Heaven's sake why can't you dip your ruddy headlights like everyone else?

(Bottom) You've heard of Purple Rain, you may even have read some purple prose, now here's some purple sky - a sure sign you've blown something up.



E NROLL YE IN the Space Commando Prep School. Gather thy state-of-the-art star fighters and thy chum-upon-chums wingman. Forage ye into deepest space and engage ye in laser-to-laser combat with the vile Kilrathi. Test thy mettle to the utmost limit with a choice of over 15 adversary craft, various sub space objects (asteroids, nav beacons, ejected pilots), and large mission based expeditions (each with a possible four sub-missions). Design ye these missions yourself and save ye these missions on disk, to play and play anon. Read ye this review and decide whether to part ye with thy 'gold'.

As a sort of filler between the now-aged *Wing Commander II* and the long-awaited (i.e. long delayed) *Privateer*, Origin have released *Academy*, which as ye may read above, is an object orientated mission designer for the *Wing Commander II* engine. I say 'object orientated' not just - as you may think - to be poncey, but rather to explain the disappearance of those long badly-dubbed intros and the exhaustive 'plot elements' which gave *Wing Commander II* a certain depth and character. Minus these sections, the *Wing Commander* package has been trimmed from an OTT nine HD disks to an acceptable three.

On these three you receive a batch of 'test' missions and a complete, if simple, designer. Starting with a blank sector of space, with you in the centre, you can select a few choice enemies from a bank of icons. These range from old stalwarts such as The Ferret and The Sabre, to some newbies (and toughies) like the Wraith and the Jarthek. Placing these relative to you, alongside inanimate objects such as data pods or ejected pilots (to add rescue elements to your campaign), forms the backbone of your mission. Then you select your ship and its weapons load,

and do the same for your wingman, defining his 'hobbies' and characteristics to give him a fuller character. For those new to the *Wing Commander* ethos, wingmen are 'stars' - the *Wing Commander* anthem runs along sort of: 'Without my wingman I am nothing/My wingman is my guardian/I would give my girlfriend to my wingman any day/Gladly. Gladly. Gladly.' lines. Once you've set up your variables, you are then ready to execute the mission.

The *Wing Commander II* system, ostensibly, uses scaled bitmaps which are ray-traced and speedily animated for maximum realism. In-reality, while the graphics are very impressive statistically, they tend to start suffering as soon as they move. The scaling is performed in 'jumps'; making spacecraft turns a bit 'three point' and 'head on' attacks a messy jerky affair. The explosions, however, are great.

Wing Commander Academy has one major problem. It's coming out of the shadow of *X-Wing*. After spending hours in fluid and smooth and exciting full screen space combat, it's difficult to go back to *Wing Commander*'s jerky, halting, quite repetitive one third screen experience. Although *Wing Commander Academy* plays heavily on character aspects in that it has more powerful wingman delegation commanders, enemy insulting, and a wider range of ships, it's depth (especially in this stripping down version) has nothing on *X-Wing*. Also, this designer exposes the shallowness of gameplay. With no objectives, or story, or an add story element, and sorely limited options (all you can really do is arrange battles) *Wing Commander Academy* is really only a must for those breast-fed on *Wing Commander* in the PC's youth and, even then, they may find themselves kicking and screaming and smacking their gums for bigger breasts (if you see what I mean).
David McCandless.

Only really worth it for Wing Commander combat addicts.

SCORE

60

specs

**Minimum Memory: 517K
Minimum Processor: 386**

**Minimum Speed: 20MHz Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb extra
Minimum Graphics: VGA Sound Cards
Supported: All the usual Controls: Keyboard,
Mouse, Joystick Needs: Wing Commander**

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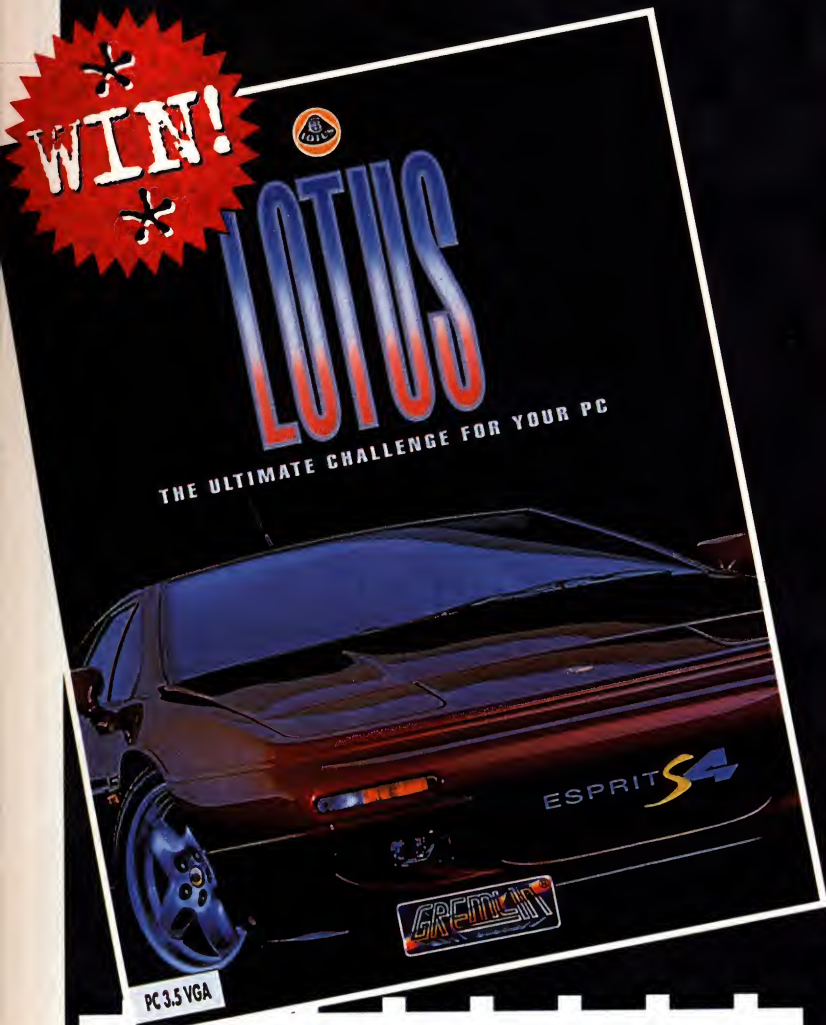
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Rules

1. Employees of Dennis Publishing, Gremlin or Lotus caught entering will be run over.
2. Entries received after 17 September will be used to make papier maché model cars.
3. As a forfeit, anyone disputing the Editor's decision will wash his car every Sunday for life.

For most of us Gremlin's *Lotus* is the nearest we'll ever get to driving an expensive sports car around a race track. However, the lucky winner of this rather special competition is going to get a chance to indulge in the real thing.



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The catch

There is of course the obvious one - you're going to have to answer three questions. But there is a second, due to force of timing, the closing date for this competition has to be 17 September. Sorry and all that.

Now here's the questions:

1. Which of the following is *not* a type of Lotus?
a) *Elan* b) *Midget* c) *Esprit*
2. Lotus had Olympic success by building a rather special
a) *Go-kart* b) *Bicycle* c) *Skateboard*
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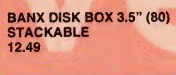
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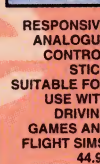
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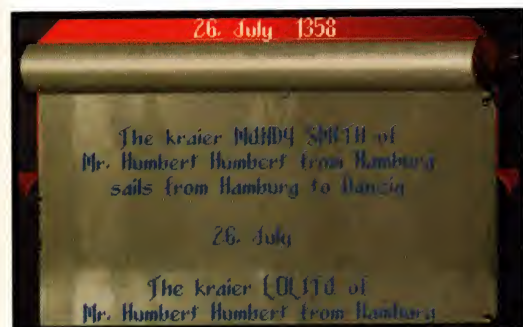
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The Patrician



And verily didth we search far and wide for someone to review a Game in which Merchants featureth; and into the office didth Patrick McCarthy stagger and we didth smile, for he doth worship at the feet of Mammon exceeding, and will do anything for a quick thaler.

Shipping schedules – a lot more reliable than the departure board at Heathrow!



THE PATRICIAN is essentially a trading game, casting you as a merchant in the cities of the Hanseatic League of 14th century northern Europe and leaving you to your own devices. It's up to you to then trade, lie, cheat and bribe your way to the top (try to imagine *Howard's Way* with German names and funny hats).

You start the game with a small ship, an even smaller sum of money and a rather fetching hat – unless you choose to play a quick game, in which case you find yourself in possession of two ships, a lot more money and a more streamlined hat.

Well, actually I 'imagined' the hats. You have to do a fair amount of 'imagining' in this, since you see neither your own face nor the faces of anyone else in the game, except – briefly – for a hunchbacked marriage-broker, your chosen partner and the all-important moneylender.

Visually, the game... well, it fails to rivet. It's played through a series of still screens: the harbour, the inside of your office, the town square and so on. Click one such area in order to pursue vast riches.

Although they're all very nicely drawn and coloured-in and stuffed to the gills with perspective, they are essentially static, and rather dull after a while (about 40 seconds, actually). Alright, so the odd seagull flies by (not when you're in the office, you understand) and some of the people in the town square seem to suffer from Parkinson's disease, but it's still not what you'd call visually arresting.

The sound is bearable with a soundcard but, as you can imagine it's not too extensive – a choice of endless twittering, but not especially aggravating, music or spot sound effects: hammering in the shipyard, crowd noises in the square, seagulls shouting; that sort of stuff.

But what's the point?

The point of the game is, initially, to amass wealth by trading goods, then to improve your social standing in your chosen home town until you are voted mayor. Once you've managed that, your goal in life will be to become the Alderman of the entire Hanseatic League (the 14th century equivalent of Graeme Kelly). Unfortunately,

everyone else in the game, whether human (up to four can play at once) or computer, is out to do the same thing – and they don't care how they go about it.

To help you on your way, there are advantageous marriages to be had,

guilds to join and parties to be thrown. To hinder you, there are pirates, annoying kings and blackmailers. It all sounds very exciting, doesn't it? Sort of.

The trading side of *The Patrician* is supposed to be governed by market forces, seasonal alterations in pricing, historical fact and other such grown-up considerations. In practice, it sometimes smacks of a random, or even a downright spoilsport approach.

There are 18 varieties of goods to trade in, from basics like corn, fish oil and wood, to luxury items like furs and peppers. Each time you go to a new port, you painstakingly list the prices, note the rough amount available in the town, and so on.

This will be your general reference table. It is historically accurate – at the time the game is set, London was the place to go for wool, Riga for corn, Toensberg for fish oil.

THE SHIPYARD

(Below Left) Another beerfest is over, but the heavy metal band have left their inflatable behind.
(Below) The ancient practice of toasting old friends is still a popular pastime at our local hostelry.



And, of course, there are places in which these commodities were expensive. The trick is to match the ports, don't constantly use a certain route (thus flooding the market), watch out for news (like a big spice delivery to London from Spain) and away you go. This is where it can be extremely irritating.

Let's take an example

Let's take, for example, the delivery of spices to London. Peppers, usually for sale at around 1100 thaler, aren't worth buying, because nobody will give you more than about 800 for them. Suddenly they're available in London for 475 thaler. Off you dash to buy as much as you can. You sail to one of the ports where you know you should get a good price for the peppers, only to find that the price they're prepared to give you has dropped to 550 thaler. It's the same when you try another port. It can't be market forces because the town doesn't have any peppers at all, and there's no way 'seasonal variations' account for it.

Fluctuations in price are acceptable, but when you plan your route to take wine from somewhere that pays 380 thaler to somewhere that pays 850, only to find the price they'll give you has dropped by around 400, it's a bit of a wind-up.

Many 'events' are sent to try you, too. I had a reasonable little thing going with the Norwegian town of Toensberg. I'd set up warehouses stocked with fish oil and hemp, taken on locals and was beginning to get special deals there. Then the bloody King of Norway steamed in and stole all my property – presumably chanting 'Maggie Thatcher, Winston Churchill, etc. Your boys took one hell of a beating...' as he did so. Almost immediately afterwards a fire destroyed Hamburg, along with all my property there, my ship was attacked and gutted by pirates at sea, and I found myself with almost nothing again. To make matters worse, my wife was still alive. ☹

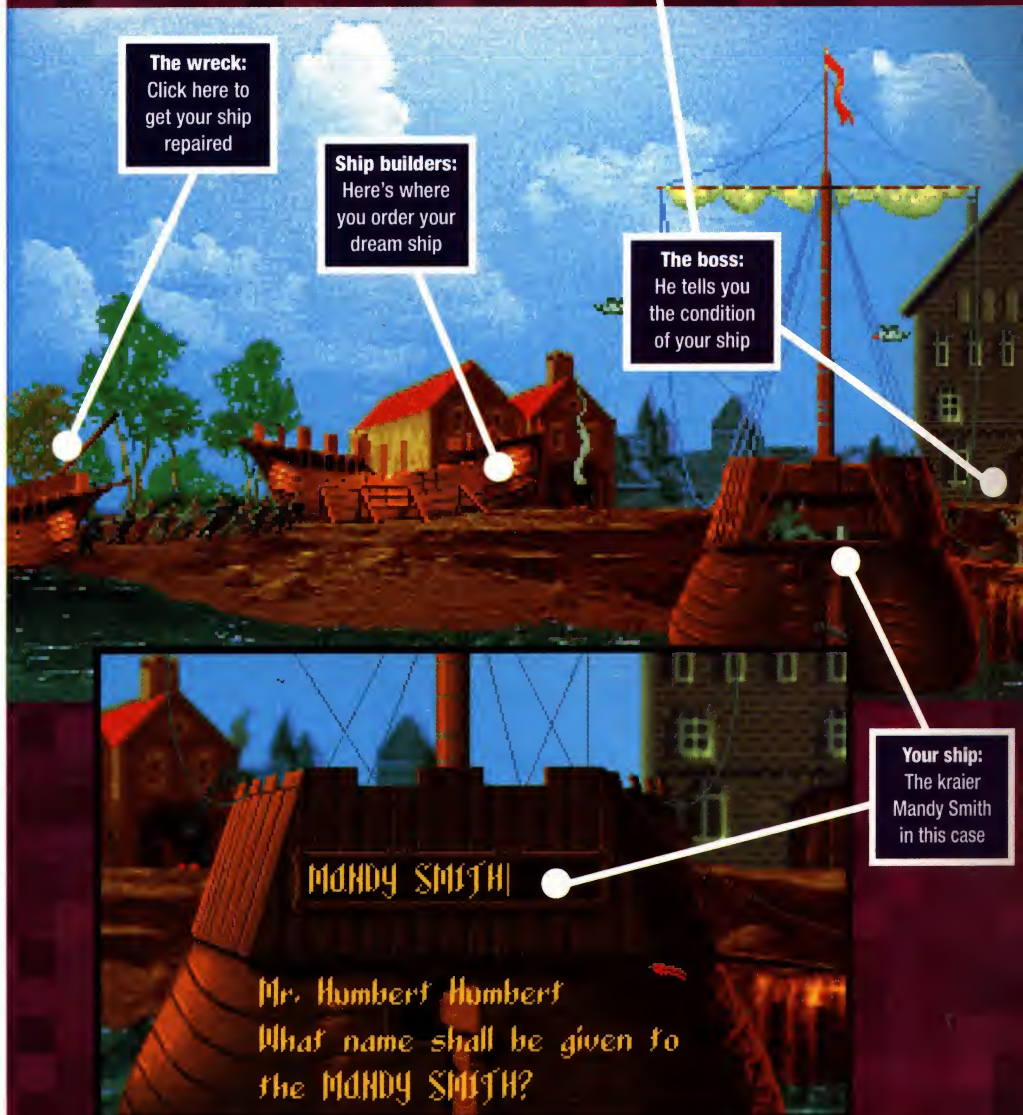
The shipyard is where it all happens on the transportation front. Assuming you've gone for the full game option, you'll own one small ship at the start of the game: a kraier. The condition of the ship can vary at the start, and it's worth going through the re-start procedures a couple of times until you get one in 'excellent' condition.

The more you use the ship, the more it wears, and if you're not careful you'll wreck it completely. The man on the right with the clipboard is the boss; he tells you (honestly) what condition the ship is in. It's best to check its condition at the shipyard after every few journeys and not to load it fully, to save on wear and tear.

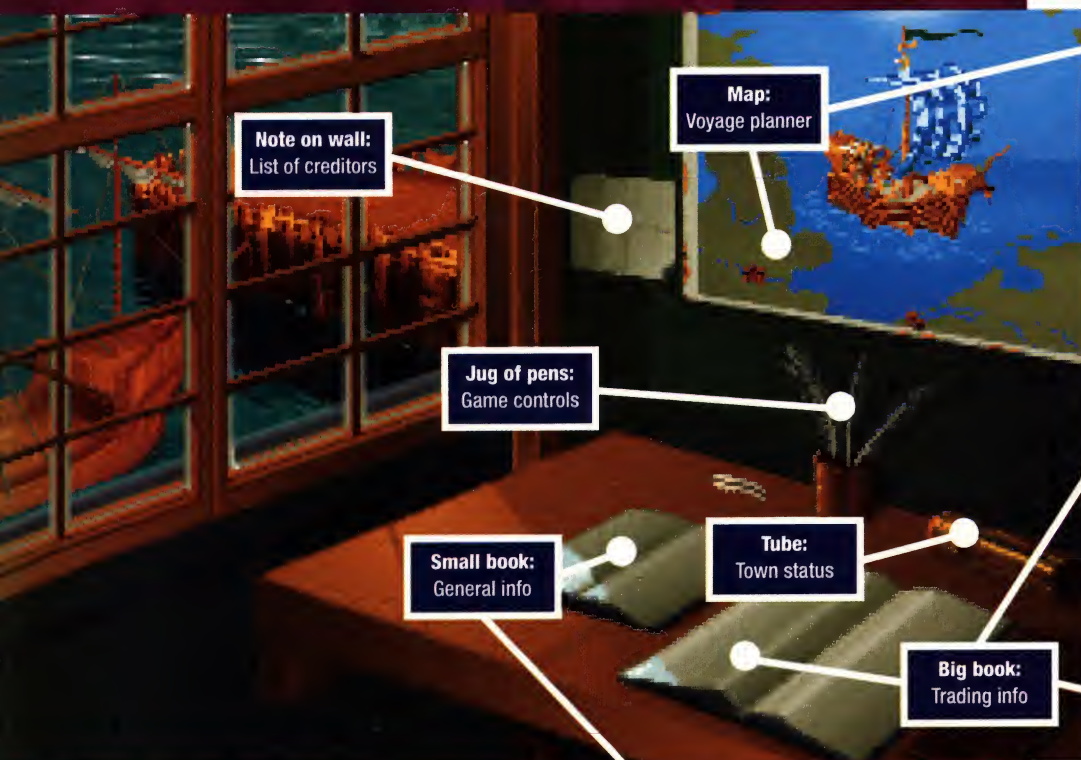
Leave it too long between repairs and the space in the hold will be taken up by support beams, reducing its capacity. This will obviously cost you money in the long run.

The wreck on the left is where you click to get the ship repaired. The devious swines who do the repairs are out to rip you off – it's worth getting lots of different cost estimates, until a reasonably cheap one pops up. This can take several attempts.

In the middle, the ship on the stocks is where you click to order your dream ship. You'll see the tech specs for the ship, and the cost. Usually you'll also see a list of materials needed to build the ship – something along the lines of eight million tons of hemp, a small ocean's worth of pitch, and the entire contents of Dresden's crockery output for five years. Assuming this doesn't put you off, it's up to you to sail around Europe collecting the necessities, keep them in storage (so some other git doesn't nick them and get his own ship built) and, once you've collected all that you'll need, sell them to the town and order your ship.



THE OFFICE



Note on wall:
List of creditors

Map:
Voyage planner

Jug of pens:
Game controls

Small book:
General info

Tube:
Town status

Big book:
Trading info



| ware | town | ship | price | |
|----------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| corn | 15813 | 8 | 58 | 1 2-3 |
| meat | 188 | 8 | 184 | 4 5 6 |
| fish | 7 | 8 | 118 | 7 8-9 |
| ale | 7784 | 8 | 43 | 8 + + |
| honey | 98 | 8 | 253 | - 6 |
| cloth | 8 | 8 | 322 | |
| crockery | 8 | 8 | 298 | |
| wood | 7978 | 8 | 46 | |
| wine | 365 | 8 | 548 | |
| buy: | -1- | Max: | -2- | 7635 |

| ware | town | store | price | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| corn | 15813 | 8 | 48 | 1 2-3 |
| meat | 188 | 8 | 73 | 4 5 6 |
| fish | 7 | 8 | 65 | 7 8-9 |
| ale | 7784 | 8 | 27 | 8 + + |
| honey | 98 | 8 | 214 | - 6 |
| cloth | 8 | 8 | 243 | |
| crockery | 8 | 7 | 225 | |
| wood | 7978 | 8 | 38 | |
| wine | 365 | 8 | 368 | |
| sell: | -7- | Max: | -6- | 7635 |

This is where all your trading and cut-throat exploitation of the underprivileged is carried out. The view from the window is pretty evocative, isn't it? You can almost smell the old sea-dog's salty underwear flapping in the off-shore breeze. You click on different bits of the screen to do different things:

The small book

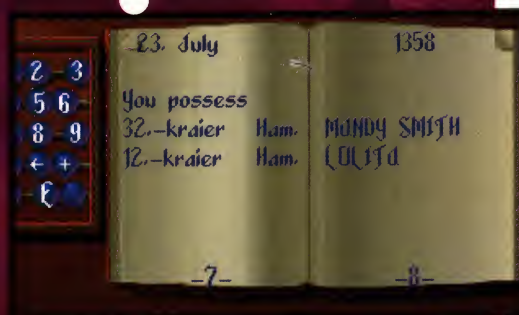
The small book on the table provides you with general information: the ships in your possession, their current whereabouts and carrying capacity; how much money you have in the ship you're currently using; how many men are sailing it and the minimum necessary to do so.

If you have goods in storage, whether in rented storage or in your own warehouse, it shows you how much. You can also build your own warehouses from this screen. This is always worth doing, as it saves renting warehouse space, and will also automatically bring in rent if you're not using the warehouse's full capacity yourself.

In case you have the memory retention of a goldfish in cold water, it reminds you where your 'home' office is and whether you're married or not. In addition, it tells you how many employees you have working for you and how much it's costing you to pay the work-shy tapeworms. (*Methinks a career as a publisher beckons. Ed.*)

The big book

This is where you do your trading: it lists the town's prices for buying and selling all the goods. You can buy goods to load aboard your ship immediately, or – if the price is too good to miss, and you think it's a good idea to buy vast amounts – buy goods and store them in a warehouse for later.



The paper pinned to the wall

This lists your creditors, where they are and how much you owe them. It doesn't do you any good simply to avoid the towns in question – if you don't pay the people back, you'll find the money is taken from your central account.

The jug with the pens

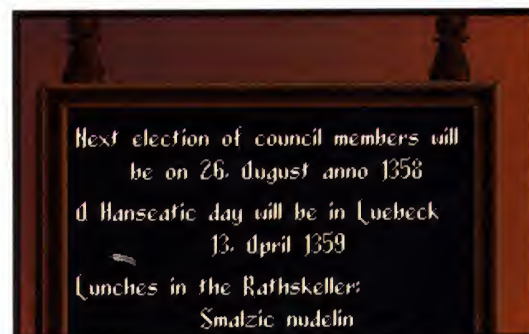
Game options and controls. Including saving the game, toggling with the music and sound effects, opting for old or new calendars (Erting, Scheiding or August, September) and altering the game speed (slow, ponderous or moribund – ho ho).

The tube thing

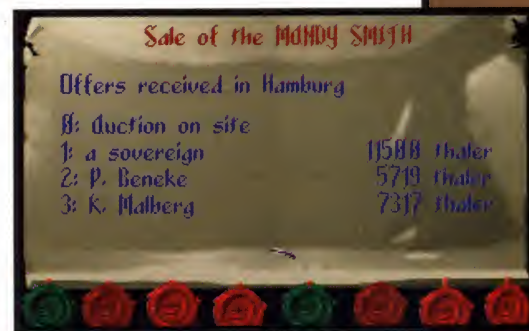
The town's status. It tells you the town's population and mayor, what kind of town it is (rich, splendid, toddlin', etc.), how much tax you have to pay per year for the honour of living there, and how many ships have docked there this year.

The map

Click on the map to decide where you'll be sailing to next with your cargo of goods, on your merry journey to the top of the Hanseatic League.



Aaagh! Hope they invent the Filofax soon.



Mandy Smith is auctioned, but where's Bill Wyman?

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 20MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 4Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Soundcards: Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, Ad-Lib, Ad-Lib Gold
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse



Moneylenders

This evil child of Thatcherism – well, alright, a little bit earlier than that – is your only route to starting out in business. He's more of a moneylending agent than a moneylender – he merely passes on the available loans to you, and informs you of those who are looking for financial assistance, rather than running the risk of losing his personal wedge.

You don't have any control over the interest rates offered to you; it's simply a matter of going to the moneylender, checking over and over again what's on offer and at what interest rate, refusing the more outlandish ones and waiting in the hope of finding something a little less murderous.

Strangely, when you're offering money for other people to borrow, you don't set the interest rates yourself – people go to the moneylender and say how much they want to borrow and at what rate of interest.

You'll notice a marked contrast between the rates of interest charged to you and the rates you're allowed to charge. A typical offer to you will be something along the lines of: 'A craftsman offers 250 thaler at an interest rate of 56%, falling due in 200 days.' Whereas when someone comes to you for money, it's not unusual to see, 'A craftsman asks for 98,968 thaler at an interest rate of 3%, falling due in 352 days,' or even 'A craftsman asks for 157,968 thaler at an interest rate of 0%, falling due in 456 days.'

That seems fair. The worst bit is that you have to pay the complete interest on the sum, even if you pay it back in advance.

PC ZONE score

Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

65

Price: £34.99 **Out:** 14 September
Published: Daze
Telephone: 071 328 2762

IN PERSPECTIVE

Pirates is another game that has ships with sails in it. *Storm Master* is much the same and *Caesar* is another struggling-your-way-to-the-top game.

Caesar

The Patrician

Pirates

Storm Master

To the trading side!

The trading side of the game is gradually supposed to be overtaken by the intrigue: turn down Marilyn Monroe and marry an ugly widow (she's usually rich), then move to a town with the Plague in the hope that she dies and you can marry again. Or bribe council members in the hope that they'll improve your standing in the town. Get lots of food in and throw parties to woo the townsfolk. Hire employees for the same reason. Unfortunately it's all rather a token attempt, and it doesn't quite work.

Give a feast and you'll find yourself being blackmailed for 'indulging in wild night-time activities' and 'leading an immoral life'. Bribe an official and you'll be blackmailed for that. The blackmailer's demands keep increasing, but the fines in court far outweigh the money spent in the initial offence. It's totally up to you what you do, but it's all fairly basic.

I'd have preferred to be able to take huge loans from people and simply try to avoid their town for the rest of the game, rather than them collecting from my central fund automatically; they could send the boys round, there could be a fight, I could end up in traction if I lost – you know, a bit more real interaction. I should be able to hire nasty gits to protect me. Everything could have a little more consequence, and a little less of the 'random event' factor.

Anyway, back to this. Overall, although at first it's pretty engrossing, as you pay off your initial debts, save up for new ships, work out routes that should yield reasonable profits, and keep up with events by way of the rolling 'news scroll', and try to improve your lot by devious means, it can soon turn into a war of attrition. You find yourself playing because you refuse to give in to the bastard thing, rather than because you love it.

I keep going back to it, but only in the same irritated way I keep going back to an insect bite. Although without the pus. ☒



Heh heh, I love muddy, rainy days. Mr Caretaker... say bye bye to your floor!

Ambush at Sorinor

War strategy game anyone, said the Editor. 'No thanks,' said **Andy Clerkson**.



COUNTRY RAVAGED by war. Feuding factions fighting it out over pieces of turf. An intractable situation fuelled by deep religious and cultural rifts, and years of class oppression. Sound familiar? Mindcraft's latest war strategy game, *Ambush at Sarajevo...*

er... *Sorinor* takes you away from the horrendous struggles so prevalent in real life and lets you create a few of your own. Before you say: 'Piss off Clerkson. War strategy is for boring gits who actually like wars, read books about them, and then enjoy recreating real old battles like Waterloo or the Somme which take years to complete', Mindcraft's strategy games aren't like that. Whether they're set on this world, out of this world or in a fantasy world all of their own (like the AD&Desque *Ambush*), they're not based on real battles, and usually take the form of little missions that can take minutes to complete. The most popular of Mindcraft's strategic affairs is *Siege*. Those boys know when they're on to a good thing, and have based *Ambush at Sorinor* on the same game engine. The difference being - guess what - you ambush things, rather than lay siege to them. Nah, really?

Strategic gamers ignore this bit!

For anyone who hasn't played this sort of game, the whole thing is based on tables of numbers. Why? Because strategy games are, true enough, based on having a strategy. Having a strategy means knowing who you're up against and getting the right people in the right places to fight them. For each mission in *Ambush at Sorinor* you are told the type of foe you'll be up against (although you always face some surprises), then you have to match the most appropriate troops to fight them. This means getting your manual out and analysing figures which translate into the strengths and weaknesses of the foe (their speed, attack and defence ratings, and what type of weapons and armour they have). Foe analysed, you go back to the manual to look for troops with skill ratings and weapon and armour scores that best fit the bill. Better troops cost more money, so you have to keep an eye on your budget and can't just go around buying up the biggest, baddest bastards in town. This all takes time but, unless you get into it, your enjoyment of the game won't span more than about a day. **ES**

Strategy games, of course, have more icons than the average Catholic Church. They tend to be a tad more reliable too. (Pause while awaiting thunderclap.)

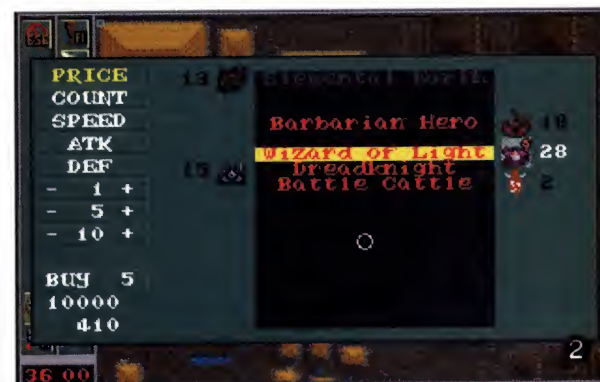
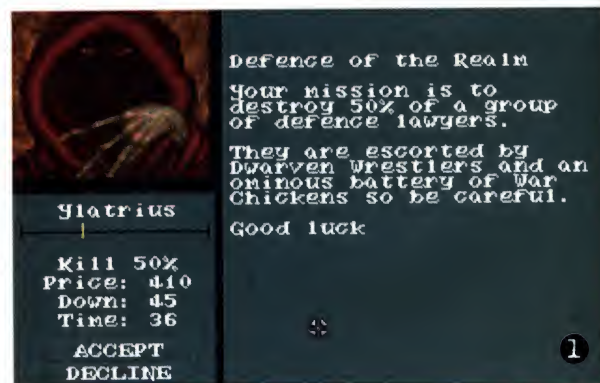


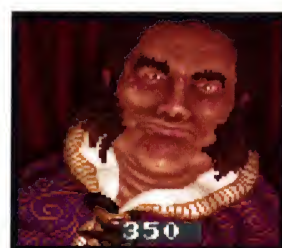
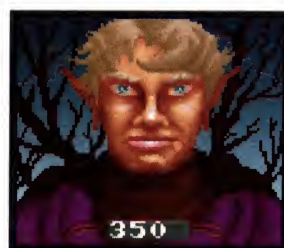
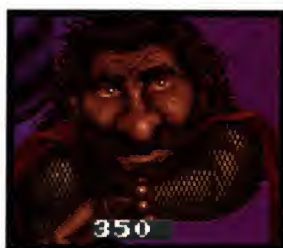
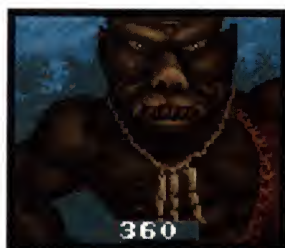
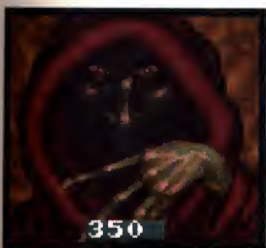
THE CLANS



ROKAN

Typical Rokan nights out incorporate boozing pints of blood, stuffing down a War Chicken vindaloo and doing a bit of elf-bashing down Sorinor's High Streets. This type of antics and a penchant for wearing the skins of their prey means they can kick up a bit of stink. Best to employ Nose Plate armour when fighting Rokans.





YLATRIUS

Typical wizard-stroke-mage tribe. Lazy sons-of-witches that are so wrapped up in their zillion year old manuscripts that personal hygiene goes right out the window. Just look at those fingernails. Best weapon to use on Ylatrians: the Double-edged Emery Board Sword.

GRLZX

On a scale of one to ten, Grlzx score one for brains, ten for teeth. Still an Grlzx doesn't have an honest bone in his body, so don't be fooled by their boyish good looks. Best defence against Grlzx: Colgate tipped arrows – keeps them busy for days.

DROKAL

Drokals are dwarves, so they're short. In order to convince other tribes that they are a lot harder than they look, all Drokals undergo plastic surgery at birth to make them look like a caricature of Brian Blessed.

TWILLIN

Twillins are a sensitive and cultured race. Embarrassed about their squeaky voices and wispy blonde locks, they spend their formative years chiselling their chins so as to look a bit more manly. Cut them down to size with insults regarding their sexuality.

SERNEVAN

Apparently human, this doesn't say much for the rest of us. Obese, dishonest, lascivious and acned to the eyeballs. I'd rather snog a Twillin, any day. Best weapon to use against Sernevan – Biactol Bombs

HIDE AND SEEK

1 The Ylatricus clan needs some help. They offer a purse of 410 to slaughter a few Defence Lawyers. Pah! This this a terrible insult to my professional pride, but then I notice that War Chickens are involved.

2 What the hell, I'm a ruthless mercenary. I accept and stomp off to buy some troops. Wizards of Light always come in handy but are a bit on the expensive side at 28 coins. This is where you need to consult your manual and do the sums. Hmmm! Up against War Chickens, so I'll take some sturdy Battle Cattle.

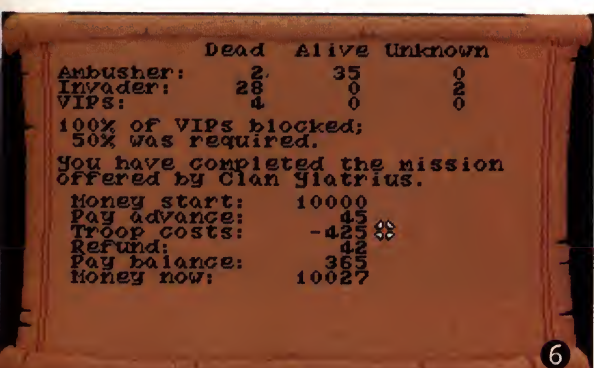
3 This is where it all goes mental. Ambushees enter via the blue squares (top left) and need to exit by the green (bottom right). The red dots are my carefully positioned ambushers, waiting to pounce from behind buildings and stuff. The Yellow dots are also mine, they are the currently active group. A minute ago all was quiet on the Ambush front. As soon as I hit the start button all the blue dots (enemies) and green dots (targets) came rushing out making for fast thinking or a lot of game pausing. Can't make out what's going on – turn to the next screen.

4 Ah, mêlée at its most beautiful. My active group (the Battle Cattle) are trying to mow down the target (green) while my Wizards give the War Chickens a right roasting. Pausing and re-assessing the game map is crucial here as there are other battles going on all over the map.

5 Two of the Defence lawyers slip through the net but quick use of the Hunt option lets me track them with three Barbarian Heroes. Nowhere to run.

6 Success! Or maybe not. All the VIPs were killed but a tally of the figures shows I made a whole 27 coins out of that carnage. Maybe buying all those Wizards was a bit over the top.

'There's about 40 troop types including the usual Dwarven Archer types, but also the rarer farmyard menaces such as the dreaded War Chicken...'





Putting his years of training at camouflage School to good use, Andy Clarkson cunningly disguises his troops as garden vegetables.

Having said that...

Ambush at Sorinor is tip-top strategy entertainment. Good locations, characters, myriad missions and an all-important editor function. The story goes that Sorinor is controlled by six warring clans. They all hate each other, and are constantly a-murdering and a-pillaging each other. Chances of forming a coalition government based on proportional representation are slim indeed. You are a mercenary commander all too pleased to exploit this political instability, as the best way to make a lot of money in a civil war is to forget your morals, become a bastard to end all bastards and sell your services to the highest bidder.

Friend or foe

You get two choices – ambush or be ambushed. The leaders of the clans offer missions either to maul some other travelling clans people or to protect some of their VIPs while they stroll through a dodgy area. Remember, you're a mercenary so your enemy one day is your best pal the next. A successful mission will please the clan that you were working for and piss off the clan that you fought against. The annoyance or geniality of the different clans towards you shows up in a level of 'pissed-offedness' which will endear them to offer good money for easy missions or a pittance for a suicide runs respectively. Tip one: It pays to juggle your services around a bit in an attempt to keep everyone happy.

Cash up front

Once a mission has been accepted, you need to buy your troops and deploy them on the gamemap. (There's about 40 troop types, including the usual Dwarven Archer types, but also the rarer farmyard menaces such as the dreaded War Chicken and the frightful Battle Cattle – surreal? Not on your bacon.) If you plump for an ambushee option, your troops need to chart a safe course for the VIPs across the gamemap to the exit gates, dodging and brawling ambushers along the way. Of course, ambushing is more fun, not only do you get the element of surprise but you also get to place fiendish traps for the unsuspecting to step right in. Ambushers succeed when their target(s) in the party have been slaughtered.

The big (and little) picture

Once the troops have been deployed, all hell breaks loose with little dots that scurry about all over your screen. The gamemap can be viewed in three modes: whole map (little map with tiny dots representing the forces), strategic (zoom in for part of the map with bigger dots) and local (zoom in even further to immediate area to transform troops from dots to two-dimensional characters). The ambush can be paused at any stage, which is crucial for rethinking, giving new commands and basically getting a handle on what the hell is going on. Tip two: while you're in local map mode concentrating on one particular battle, very nasty things are happening simultaneously in other parts of the game map, so you really need to do a lot of quick scrolling or pausing.

The best laid plans...

The most traumatic moments are when you've diligently positioned your troops in what you think are strategic ambush positions, and suddenly hundreds of little enemy bleeders come scurrying out of the traps heading off in all manner of weird directions totally bypassing your troops. This type of cock-up gives you a General Custer on the strategy scale.

Editors, I love 'em

Behind every successful strategic battle game is a good mission editor. This is essential for extending game life and generally messing about. *Ambush at Sorinor* lets you mix and match any troop type and scenario. The scenarios range through swamp, ice, city and orchard. And if you're into playing God, there's a terrain editor which enables you to completely redraw the game map from scratch. So when the spots before your eyes begin to blur into a boring mess of pixels, you can always try your hand at city planning.

If you're not one for playing a game with the mouse in one hand and a spreadsheet in the other, stick to the fantasy graphic adventures which offer arcade quality action and better graphics. But if you like your strategy, but want to keep it short and sweet, *Ambush at Sorinor* is an excellent example of the genre. Essential gaming for anyone with a *Siege* type of mentality. ☐

PCZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 12MHz

Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk: 7Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Comments: 2Mb extended memory needed to play digitised sound effects.

PCZONE score

Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game that won't bog you down in the trenches.

70

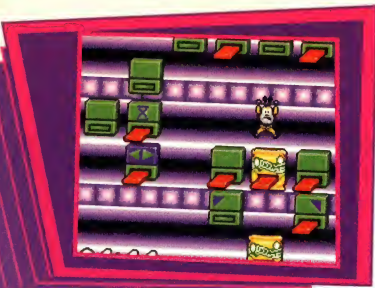
Price: £39.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Mindcraft/Empire
Telephone: 081 343 7337

IN PERSPECTIVE

Ambush

Cohort II

Siege



"...great looking, fun graphics and
addictive game-play makes this
a superb addition to your collection"
THE ONE

ONE STEP BEYOND™



FEATURING
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"Ocean have once
again come up with
a classic" **THE ONE**

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Cricket is the sport of gentlemen, horse racing is the sport of kings, and ice hockey is the sport of Scandinavian serial killers. We let Patrick 'Ulf' McCarthy loose on the PC version of the classic Mega Drive game, *NHL Hockey*.



NHL Hockey

THE NUMBER of arcade action sports games that are recognised as true greats are very few indeed. There's *Sensible Soccer* on the Amiga, *Super Tennis* on the Super NES and the various versions of *John Madden Football* on the Mega Drive. Then there's the classic ice hockey game, *EA Hockey*, and its re-jigged follow-up, *NHLPA Hockey*, on the Mega Drive. It seems like only yesterday that I was struggling through yet another version of the uninspiring *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* and bemoaning the lack of a version of one of EA's games on the PC, and now suddenly, like a slapshot from the red line, it's here. (Except it hasn't left a big red weal on my chest.)

'Aha,' you're probably thinking, assuming you haven't already dropped the mag in Smiths and are sprinting for the 6:48 to East Grinstead, 'but I bet this version of the game is two years behind the Mega Drive version, like all the other games that eventually get to the PC from other formats.' That's the best thing about it - you're getting the latest version before it's even available on the Mega Drive. *NHL Hockey*, in its PC form, is the equivalent of *NHLPA Hockey 94*, or whatever the next Mega Drive one is going to be called, incorporating all the features that the next version in the original format of the game will have. That's something other software houses might like to take note of.

Assuming that I'm now only talking to people waiting for the 6:53 to Norwood Junction and my grasp on their attention is equally fleeting, I won't beat about the bush and drag out the verdict until the final sentence: this game is absolutely brilliant. There's a tendency for anyone who's seen the Mega

Drive games to take it all slightly for granted, until you remember the competition on the PC - that's when you realise what a good job EA has done.

Let's start with the options: As you'd expect, you can play one-off exhibition games to your heart's content. Every current NHL team is available, along with two All-Star teams. EA now has the official licence from the National Hockey League, so the teams have the correct nicknames and logos, and the licence from the NHL Players' Association means the players in the teams are all correctly-named chaps too. This

means you have the likes of Brett Hull, Mario Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky to play with. You can play your way through an entire season, or you can simply launch straight into the knockout-basis playoffs and pretend you've done all the hard work already. There are extensive facilities with which to customise your teams and every one of the 24 teams can be human-controlled. You needn't even play all the games on the same computer: players can export the league database to a floppy disk, take the floppy home with them to play their games, then import and merge

the results onto the central database using the extensive League Manager's facilities.

Control

For those of you who've never played an EA Mega Drive game, the first thing you'll notice is how well designed the controls are and how quickly they become intuitive.

Button one can best be summarised as the 'subtle' button. This is used to select the player nearest the puck, to pass the puck and to make tackles with the stick - either to steal the

'...and it plays beautifully. It's easy to get into, and you'll soon be stringing those passes together and raining shots down on the goal.'



'IT'S THE LITTLE DETAILS THAT MAKE A GAME'

ONE-TIMERS

New to this version of the game: get players to shoot first time by passing to them and holding down the shoot button before the puck reaches them. Instant slapshot ahoy.

THE REFS

You can trip them up. Wahay!

THE CROWD PROTECTION SCREEN

You can smash the glass behind the goal with a wayward slapshot.

OTHER PEOPLE

You can 'take people out'. Hit them hard enough (an opposition 'star' is best) and you'll injure them. You'll get two minutes in the penalty box, but they'll be out for the period, or longer.

FIGHTS

One thing that makes the Mega Drive games such great fun is the fighting. Hit someone late or violently too many times and he'll throw off his gloves, drop his stick and start punching the crap out of you. You should respond, punching to head or body, until one of you drops to the floor or the refs stop it. (Once play stops for a face off, all you see is people circling and laying each other out from behind, in an attempt to provoke another scrap.) The after-game stats include the all-important 'Fights won', so you can satisfy your honour if you lose by putting more people on the deck.

The NHL wouldn't allow EA to include fighting in this version. It's odd, considering the number of NHL videos you can buy with 'Best Fights of 1992' on them, or whatever and considering it's one of the reasons a lot of people watch the game in the States. Still, I suppose it's not very '90s.

SEASON PLAY

Ice hockey seasons would be instantly recognisable to any Sheffield Wednesday fan. Games are played approximately every three days. You don't have to play every single game for your team in this if you don't want to – simply scroll ahead through the calendar and click on a game. The computer fills in all the results up to that point. If several players are competing at once, it's possible to export the league data onto a floppy, play the games on another PC, then import the results later, merging them with other results. There's a password facility so that each player can stop others using his team, and a separate password for the League Manager who controls the League and the conditions under which it's played (penalties, offsides, two-line pass penalties and line changes on or off, and so on).



puck or to trip the opponent, depending on your timing. Button two could be looked on as the 'force' button, used to shoot on goal (a quick press flicks off a wrist shot, a long hold means a big backswing and massive slapshot), to inject pace into a player's skating and to charge, batter and smash your opponents to the ice or into the boards. Pressing both buttons at once means your defender attempts to hold an attacker. It's all tried and tested, well thought out and most importantly, the select-the-player-nearest-the-puck bit works well. Goalies are computer controlled and play to their ratings.

All players conduct themselves with intelligence when you're not controlling them (which makes it something of a shame when you get your hands on them, really).

Oh, what an atmosphere...

The sound is universally outstanding through a Sound Blaster. There's everything from the sounds of stick on puck and bone, to authentically tinny organ music. Crowds scream and howl and boo and are whipped into a frenzy by the crowd-o-meter. There are grunts of pain when you floor an opponent and satisfying smacking noises when the puck hits them in the face. A digitised announcer, complete with slight echo, calls the penalties out, recounts the goals and assists, and the ubiquitous Ron Barr introduces the match and winds down the show when you quit the game.

All the thrills of ice hockey. Notice the unfortunate referee who made a brave but misguided attempt to head the puck, and the glass screen, shattered into a myriad of tumbling glass by a well aimed blow from Mr Lemieux.

IN PERSPECTIVE

T here's no real competition in the ice hockey game field, so I've chunked in a few leading sports games so you can get an idea how good this is. Remember these are comparative scores.

Front Page Football

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3

NHL Hockey

Sensible Soccer

Speedball 2



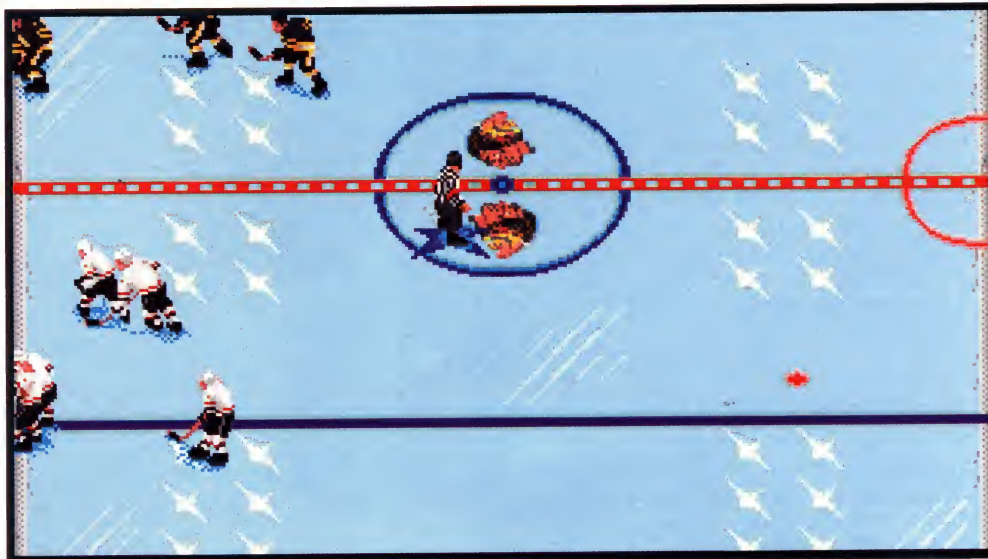
02:17 Hartford
#16 Verbeek PP (2)
Assists:
#3 Zarley Zalapski
#6 Adam Burt



IF I HAD TO SLAG THIS GAME OFF

I'd mention the fact that it probably needs almost as much memory (2Mb of EMS) to run as the ROM size of the entire Mega Drive cart. ('Lazy programming,' they cried as one in the office, confusing me somewhat.) Also the 430-odd files that need to be expanded during installation, which takes bloody ages on anything other than a ninja PC. Still, it's more than worth it.

Oh, and the fact that you can only see one player's ratings (out of 100 – not their season stats) at a time on-screen for comparison purposes. There's something in the manual about a big book with all that stuff in, but it's not finished, so I can't comment.



An ice view

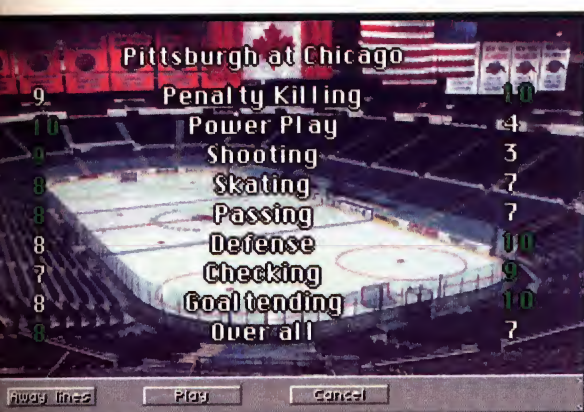
The graphics, from the TV show-style presentation screens to the in-game stuff, are excellent, and the quality of animation is as high as you'd expect if you'd seen the Mega Drive originals. Players wobble and lose their balance, but keep their feet if you don't hit them hard enough or if the player you're using isn't as strong as the man you're hitting. They reach up with one hand to bring down a high-flying puck. They lean into a heavy challenge, poke out their sticks to trip or raise them across their bodies to cross-check opponents. They somersault when you hit them from behind, and sprawl, arms and legs akimbo, onto the ice afterward. They even sit up before rejoining the fray. And it all happens at speed and flows smoothly, too. The attention to detail is heartwarming: players sitting in the dugout even drink from bottles and spit out whatever weird liquid ice hockey players drink these days. Probably something isotonic, rather than Guinness, but you can't have everything.

And it plays...

Beautifully. It's easy to get into, and you'll soon be stringing those passes together and raining shots down on the goal, but you won't score too frequently at first. It's one of the few sports games where you can shoot at *areas* of the goal, never mind just at the goal: skate past left to right and shoot bottom left, for example. Goalies are as awkward to beat in this as they are in the real thing. It takes a while to work out where it's best to shoot, and who it's best to shoot with (although you can look that up in the team information).

You can introduce your own degree of difficulty by selecting the better teams, playing the crap ones first and progressing from there. In addition you can make things easier by not playing with line-changes and offside rules, although it's more rewarding if you do have them. Successful passing is the key to a winning team – if you try to take the puck up the length of the ice on your own, you usually find yourself on your back, without the puck and with someone else's skates wedged behind your molars, which is unhygienic and ill-advised.

What more can I say? It weeps atmosphere from every orifice. It's accessible, great fun and rewards practice. It isn't just the best ice hockey game on the PC, it's the best sports game. Even if you've never been into ice hockey before, if you like sport, you'll love it. **Z**



(Above right) The players misinterpret their manager's call for an early strike and storm off the pitch to begin a sit in.
(Top left) The ubiquitous Mr Barr; an American Des Lynam but lacking the quality moustache that is the only guarantee of true greatness.
(Above left) Beloved of all players of American sports – the stats screen. The message on this one is that Pittsburgh ain't gonna score.

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score

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91

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PC ZONE

specs

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Installation: Essential
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Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick



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The UK is being invaded by Japanese comic culture. Manga books and anime films have taken the country by storm and have become bywords for a level of violence and eroticism that used to be left on the cutting room floor. Is it art? Is it pornography? Is it about to change the face of PC games in a major way? **Laurence Scottford** and **Paul Lakin** draw some Bambi-eyed, scantily clad conclusions.

A n i m e



SHOCKING SEX, gore-ridden violence and explicit language. No, we're not describing a video nasty. This is anime, the uniquely Japanese form of adult artwork that is now being exported to the UK by the crateload. To

general astonishment, and despite the sex and violence content which is far stronger than anything you'd see in conventional films, the British Board of Film Censors has given the anime films unrestricted 15 and 18 certificates, and British fans of fantasy and science-fiction comics, desperate for something new and refreshing, have welcomed manga with open arms

Mention comics in this country and you will conjure up images of *The Beano* or superhero stories in the *Marvel* tradition. Here, as in the United States, comics are largely the domain of children and obsessed collectors. In Japan comics are a way of life and, frankly, children are the smallest market. Because Japanese comics are perceived as an adult pursuit, the themes that they contain go far beyond the schoolboy humour of *The Bash Street Kids*, and are a lot hotter than *The Human Torch*.

All about Akira

The UK's passionate love affair with anime began with Katsuhiro Otomo's ultra-violent, post-apocalyptic animated tale, *Akira*. So successful was this one-off video release that the distributor, Island World, was inspired to set up the Manga Video label to capitalise on anime fever and to become a channel for future UK and American versions of Japanese animated films.

The videos have been accompanied en masse by the comics and magazines. Unlike UK and US comics, the Japanese equivalents are chunky, 'phone directory affairs. Climb aboard any tube in Tokyo and you'll be jostled by dozens of people desperately clutching them. Comics in Japan are big business – the most popular titles will comfortably sell two to three million copies every week! They cover just about every subject from crime and sex to history and sports and are read by everybody from schoolchildren to housewives and even high-flying businessmen.

Giving way to the dark side

The artforms of anime and manga have, perhaps unfairly, been noted for having a very dark side because some dwell unnervingly on intense violence – and there is a noticeable obsession in many for young, scantily clad girls. You can expect to see heads crushed, mouths gushing bile and blood, eyeballs wrenched from sockets and worse. In some films and comics, the violence is unrelenting and many British readers

and viewers, unaccustomed to seeing bloodshed portrayed so graphically, will find them hard going.

The well-documented Japanese *Lolita* syndrome rears its ugly head quite frequently in both forms. At the most innocent level it is nothing more than cheesecake – featuring teenage girls, all of whom are drastically 'cute', with big, wet, Bambi eyes and wide, pouting mouths. They are hardly the sort of character the average western man would find erotic, even though they frequently flash white, schoolgirl knickers or pale breasts.

Where the sexual aspects of manga and anime become a little more disturbing is in the mixture of violence and sex in some of the more *adult* – as opposed to grown-up – titles. The writers and artists are certainly not averse to depicting rape and sadistic violence against women. In common with the themes of fantasy and science fiction that crop up regularly in Japanese art, much of the sexual acts also fall into the domain of bestiality and machine-sex. Anything and everything from giant demons to men transformed into maniacal robots are seen engaging in sexual acts.

Anything goes

But to dismiss manga and anime for their less savoury elements is to miss out on some stunning creations. Many of the stories have serious things to say about the history and current status of Japan. Hardly surprising then, that harrowing apocalyptic visions form the basis of so many – the Japanese people may forgive, but they can not easily forget the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of their families and friends in the horrendous American nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The legacy of disease and despair left by those indiscriminate assaults on two cities of innocents still has to be faced daily by Japan's people. Although they have since rebuilt their country's industry, culture and pride, the psychological scars are still as fresh as they were in 1945.

These images of Apocalypse and Armageddon are often linked with the problems of communicating, trading and living with other civilisations that are often unwilling or unable to understand the complexities of Japanese life and culture and therefore seek to destroy or corrupt it. This is seen most visibly in the tales of romantic heroes and heroines, most of whom are endowed with paranormal powers, or at least acquire them during the course of the story. These superhuman protagonists, with Samurai-like qualities, are usually involved in a desperate attempt to save the world from the sinister forces creeping in from hellish dimensions. There are many parallels to be drawn with Japan's ancient and recent history, if you choose to see these stories as more than just pure entertainment.



Because the Japanese have always been comfortable with visual forms of communication, and because popular art has always been such an important part of Japanese life, it is really quite impossible to pin an exact date onto the genesis of manga. However, the artist Osamu Tezuka is generally agreed to be the founder of the modern manga comic strip. He began his revolutionary work drawing comic strips in a children's newspaper just after the end of the Second World War and shortly afterwards produced the first full-length manga. It was more successful than Tezuka or any of his colleagues could have imagined. That paved the way for a new comics industry which managed to attract many other artists of Tezuka's calibre. Tezuka himself spent many years producing incredible manga before he was seduced into the new and promising mediums of animated films and television. The rest, as they say, is anime...





Museum of moving image

There's no denying the popularity of anime – at the time of writing ten of the top 17 selling feature film videos are anime.

Akira is still the classic anime film with its mixture of futuristic cyberpunk and techno-fetishism. *Fist of the North Star* was one of the first videos released in this country to contain the explicit violence synonymous with this art form. However, to get the full spectrum of anime, try out *Legend of the Overfiend* which at its best contains some stunning artwork and a message laden story line. At its worst there is some gross sexual violence (surpassed by the extremely dodgy sequel *Legend of the Demon's Womb*), Jackie-style love sequences and some drawings that wouldn't look out of place on the sort of crap cartoon they show at five o'clock on BBC1.

In content, anime videos range from the sublime to the ridiculous. You want moody shots of post-Apocalypse landscapes? You got it. You want a fight in which the antagonists' strength is based on their underwear? You got it. To the uninitiated, one of the strangest aspects of anime is the apparent disparity of the elements. Take *Fist of the North Star*: amidst all the violence (for example, one character jamming his fingers through another's rib cage) is a bizarre sub-plot with a couple of 'cute' kids tootling about in a car. Weird!

Yet anime does contain some fascinatingly memorable imagery, not all of it serious. I will carry to the grave the sequence in *Ultimate Teacher* where Hinako explains that her fighting ability was destroyed when she realised people could see her knickers. Without her more modest 'Velvet Pussy' panties she is powerless. Samson and Delilah meets 20th century Japan!

Some purists would argue that we don't gain the full benefits of anime over here. For a start the American dubbing, though very professionally done, immediately detracts from the Japanese feel (though the latest crop of anime are strongly Yankophile anyway). More seriously some of what we see here has been edited down from grander works or TV series or relies on some knowledge of Japanese comic culture (although *3x3 Eyes Part 2* overcomes this somewhat by captioning some of the characters on their first appearance).

COBRA MISSION

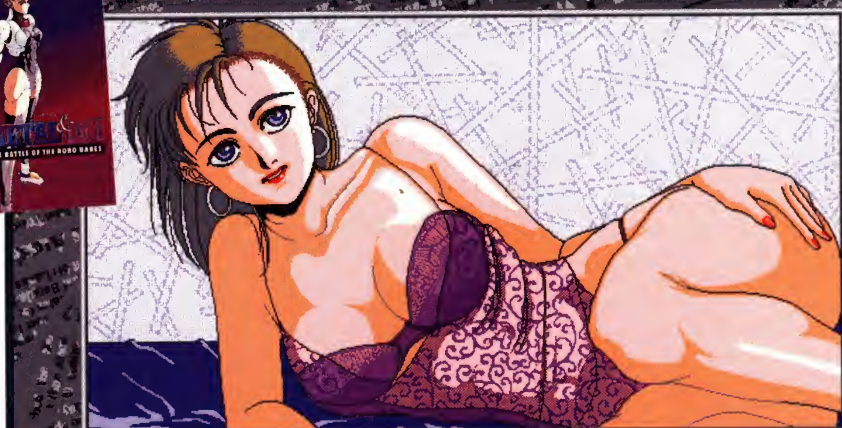
The first anime game from Megatech is *Cobra Mission: Panic in Cobra City*. Cobra is a mythical island resort off the Florida Keys, which has inherited the mainland's reputation for violence – and intensified it. The island is now run by the mob, headed by the vicious egomaniac General Kaiser.

As a super sleuth who grew up on the island, you are called by your old childhood sweetheart to help solve a crime. Kaiser and his gang have been kidnapping beautiful young women, and it's up to you and your girlfriend to rescue them and defeat Cobra's evil overlord and his henchmen.

Most of the game consists of guiding a couple of badly drawn figures about a maze of streets, visiting buildings and searching for clues and useful objects. The effect is a bit like a poor man's RPG with Japanese characters. Every now and then you are waylaid by a thug and then you are treated to a very stilted piece of animation as you slug it out.

The best graphics in the game, and frankly, the only reason for buying *Cobra Mission*, are the... er... risqué shots. Most of these are introduced for wonderfully gratuitous reasons. For instance, in the first few scenes of the game, you come across a coin-operated telescope, which you can use to spy on the naked beauties sprawled on a nearby beach.

So, *Cobra Mission* won't be the best game you've ever played, but it does have its moments and it's certainly a taste of things to come. If Megatech can keep up the quality of the graphics and combine it with smoother animation and superior gameplay, it will have a surefire hits on its hands.

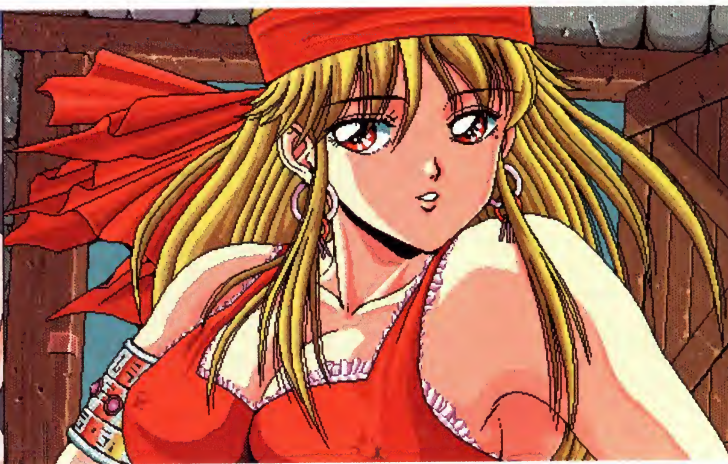


JR says ...

MENU

PANEL

Faythe, I've been dreaming of this day for a long time. I've been a naughty boy, but that's how I found out I really love you!!





You may get the impression that anime and manga consist of nothing but national navel-gazing, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Many storylines owe an obvious debt to western influences. One of the most popular anime is *Lensman*, an adaptation of the science-fiction novels of E.E. 'Doc' Smith and the cross-fertilisation between Japanese popular art and western cyberpunk can be very clearly seen. Anime and manga do have their lighter sides too. An air of 'cuteness' pervades the whole genre and this often goes hand in hand with comical situations. Rather than being slapstick, this is usually very light-hearted comedy that gives the characters a very human edge. Anime and manga artists are also quite happy to parody their own creations from time to time and some of the best stories have been tongue-in-cheek examinations of the most popular anime and manga themes.

Game over

As the console games industry is dominated by Japan, this has led to raised awareness and interest in Japanese culture, so it is hardly surprising that the worlds of anime and manga have begun to sow seeds in the high-tech world of computer games. The multifarious plots of the most popular anime and manga have rapidly made their way onto just about every console format from the handheld Game Boy to the Super NES and Sega Mega Drive. *Akira*, *Ultraman* and *Gundam F91* are just some of the titles to be honoured with conversion to an interactive form, but there have also been many others, disguised by a change of name. *Rockman* is actually based on *Mega Man* and *Last Battle* is the game of *Fist of the North Star*.

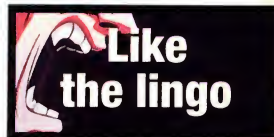
The PC has been largely ignored as a potential platform for interactive anime, but this is about to change. The most prominent company in the field of PC anime games is

American publisher Megatech. It has commissioned genuine Japanese anime artists to create the graphics for the games and they have genuinely managed to capture the spirit and style of the Japanese originals.

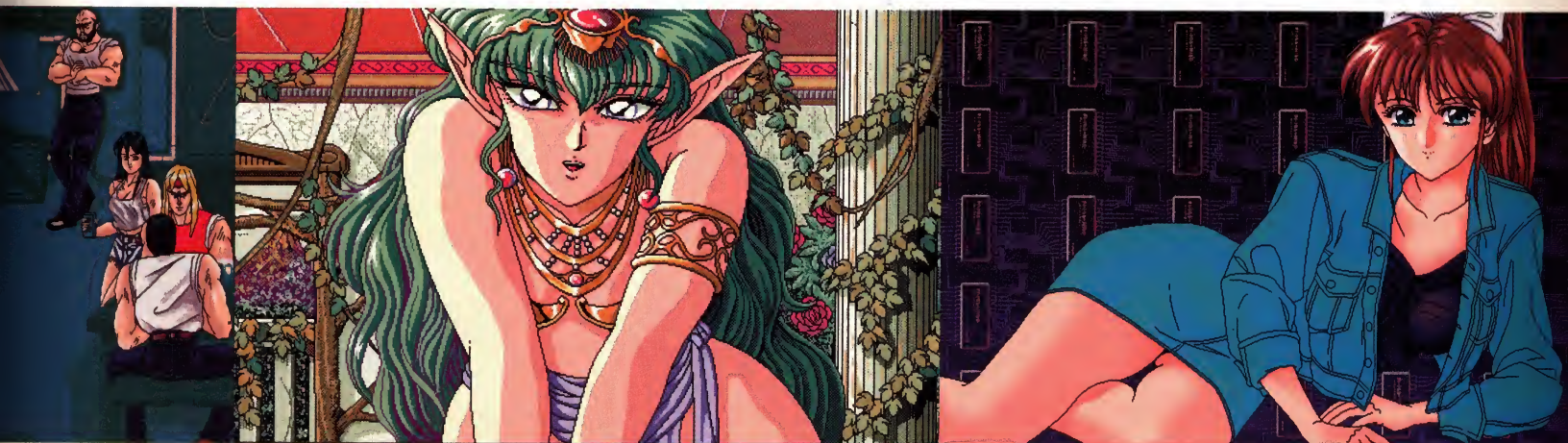
Megatech's first few releases, *Cobra Mission*, *Metal & Lace: The Battle of the Robobabes* and *Dragon Knight III*, seem to be concentrating largely on the sexual and violent aspects of the genre. Even so, the company is evidently aware that it is catering for a western market unaccustomed to the explicit nature of anime art, so the violence never exceeds the sort of thing you'd see in a Chuck Norris film, while topless teenagers is about as seedy as the sexual aspect gets. While it does not break any new ground in terms of design or gameplay, Megatech's objective has simply been to produce fun and light-hearted adult games which draw heavily on the anime style and in that they have succeeded.

Currently Megatech doesn't have a distributor in the UK, but we would bet large sums of money that it won't be long before games of this nature become officially available to gamers over here. Closer to home is *Speed Racer* a conversion of the popular racing and combat anime series (which gained cult status in the States), to be published by Accolade later this year. It features a teenage driver-cum-crime fighter, who uses his futuristic vehicle to police the city and still finds time to win races in it.

Hopefully these first few tentative titles will be just the tip of the iceberg, and they will do for anime games what *Akira* did for anime video. Whatever happens, you can be certain that anime and manga are rather more than a passing craze. They are a unique form of expression that will continue to influence UK comic artists, animators and game designers for years to come. ☐



As with any self-respecting art form, manga and anime have their own lingo and reading about the two forms can be confusing if you haven't picked up the key terms. 'Anime' is quite simply the Japanese term for animation, while 'manga', strictly speaking, means 'irresponsible pictures' but has come to be a generic term for comics. There are other essential buzzwords which the budding anime fan should get a grip on, too. OAVs are Original Anime Videos, OSTs are Original Sound Tracks and BGM is Background Music. And these are just the terms that refer to the material. Once you start immersing yourself in the actual thing, you'll soon find yourself facing a barrage of bastardised Japanese words which characterise the heroes, heroines and plots. It all gets very confusing. Help...



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Simon The Sorcerer



FOLLOWING ON FROM 'brat-pack' adventures of the *Monkey Island* ilk, through *Indiana Jones*, up to and including *Day of the Tentacle*, like me you may have become, not necessarily sick, but certainly concerned with the overt American-ness of PC adventures. You know the drill: plots about 'cute' American pirates, American computer geeks, square-jawed American heroes, sexist American sad-oes (called Larry). If your concern extends this far, then *Simon The Sorcerer* may just seem like a draft of the purest Buxton Spring. *Simon The Sorcerer* is the new, sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek, Union Jack flying high above old Blighty, stiff-upper lip, elevenses, we are not amused, 'John Cleese eh? - what a star?' adventure game from Adventuresoft. Instead of gags about mulberry pies, Dan Quayle, Vietnam, and George Washington, we have jokes about Wagon Wheels, the recession, er Dan Quayle, Cornwall and J.R.R. Tolkien. Bliss.

Gee, I love your accent

The story concerns Simon, a young English boy, who is given a spell book by a puppy (I know this sounds twee but it gets a lot more 'sarcastic' later on). Not unperplexed by this delivery, Simon places the book in his attic and promptly forgets about it. Later on, while exploring said attic, Simon rediscovers the tome, opens it and is portalled into another world. As you are. Unfortunately, the portal leads straight into a goblin's cooking pot. Oh no. But wait - luckily, the wizard Calypso's pet dog is on hand to scare the goblins and rescue him. Hooray!

When Simon arrives at the wizard's house, he's gone AWOL. The evil, cackling wizard, Sordid, has abducted him and now the Dark Army is on the rise. This is where you pick up the game. Simon (and you) are suitably bewildered and set off exploring the countryside and village surroundings with only a blatant 'borrowing' of the *Monkey Island* SCUMM system to help you.

SCUMM

For the unacquainted and, as yet, unpatronised, SCUMM stands for Script Creator Utility Maniac Mansion, a now accepted and much emulated graphic adventure system. Boxes. You have three boxes. One contains verbs (WALK TO, PICK UP, TALK TO, MOVE, GIVE etc.), one contains your inventory (graphically represented) and the final largest box is the playing area. Sweeping your mouse cursor over the playing area, say for example the tavern, will point out the important objects on the screen (the barman, Valkyries, and so on) which you can then go on to manipulate in any way you see fit. Adventuresoft heavily disguise their system with the acronym AGOS - Adventure Game Operating System.

It's that green place with castles

Simon The Sorcerer may have a sugary story-line and a fairy tale aura, but its puzzles really are (excuse me) bitch-mutha, hard-rocking, X-rated, Gott in Himmel affairs. They're, kind of,



It's a chocolate house. (Modern day interpretation: a symbolic warning about the dangers of bulimia.)

stacked on top of one another. Although you have a couple of simple use A on B type problems, several objects can only be obtained by a convoluted method. Find A, use A on B, talk to C, go to D, use B to dig up E, tell F that you've found E, wait for G to turn up and in the meantime use H on I to make J, then get E back off F in exchange for J, give J to K who'll give you M, go back to B, push B with M, and then finally receive N which is part one of subquest two, which, in turn is but a quarter of the main quest. Although the puzzles are quite logical, the distance between the first object you find and the eventual object you win can be massive.

Also, your first hour of play will be mainly exploratory, but you may find, as I did, that there aren't enough things to

explore. There's a wealth of screens, but only objects and characters of any use can be 'clicked'. So when you're faced with a large screen of bottles and jars and boxes, you can only glean any information about the two objects you can pick up. The rest are just blank.

Minus the 'gaps', the location graphics and animation sequences are done very well with slight comic touches (Simon slips on his personal stereo if you wait too long). The continuous soundtrack shifts to match the locations and adds a sizeable dollop of atmosphere, as do the standard 'comedy' sound effects (bells clanging, doors knocking etc.). And now, ladies and gentlemen, onto the gripes...

Patriot games

When you're playing a game as outwardly amusing as *Simon The Sorcerer*, you get into the habit of waiting for the gags. When they don't come, you're disappointed. When they

'Land of hope and glory/Mother of the free/Home of exce'lent humour/Python and John Cleese'. So goes our 'deputy' national anthem. It should be the title track of *Simon The Sorcerer*, says David 'Patriot Games' McCandless, of the first true-Brit, blue-blooded answer to *Monkey Island*.



Simon The Sorcerer story sequence

Let us tune in to Simon's initial explorations of this jokey other realm
(*American translations and info are on hand in italics for our overseas cousins.*)

CALYPSO'S HOVEL

1 If wizards are so astoundingly powerful with all their magic and stuff, how come they can't magic themselves better digs than this typical mage's mud hut? You'll note that among the usual arcane trappings (mystic tapestry, dusty tomes, scrolls etc.) there is also... a fridge. This is because Simon's world is more of a sarcastic realm with all sorts of 20th century gubbings about the place. Find the scissors and the magnet here.



THE GREENERY PART ONE

2 Outside the hut and the sun shines. This is a good example of how 'nice' Simon's graphics are. Lovely flowers and verdant shrubbery dotted with spot animations of butterflies, rabbits and other fauna.



SMITHY'S FORGE

3 The large, very muscular silent one is the smithy. Not a person you'd call 'Barbara' on purpose. The forge itself is un-enterable (the door, Simon tells us, 'is not designed to be opened'). He may be too engrossed in his work to help you right now, but later he'll come in very useful. Mouse pointing the table behind him will reveal a clapper. How surreal. (*American translation: 'Woah! British humour! Excellent!'*)



PLACID, CALMING SCENE

4 Now for the first spot of interaction. The guy on the floor is (to be said in a Cockney accent) 'a dodgy geezer' who tries to sell you all sorts of useless trinkets. Don't be conned however, he's just an excuse to get a 'recession' gag in. The corridors to the left and right lead to other parts of the village.



YE OLDE SHOPPE

5 Yikes, a two-headed salesperson, arguing (in true British lavatorial tradition) about wanting to go to the toilet. I feel a Zaphod Beeblebrox gag approaching... coming nearer... nope – it's another gag about the recession. Oh well. I couldn't seem to obtain any objects from this location and the game wouldn't let me steal anything. British morality eh? (*American Background Fact: 'The British had a Queen Victoria who believed that crime and s-e-x didn't exist.'*)



THE DRUNKEN DRUID

6 You can't have an adventure without a tavern. And you can't have a tavern without a comatose dwarf in the corner, three busty Valkyries chatting in Swedish and a talkative barman waxing on about the joys of capitalism. This screen is a good example of how the graphics deteriorate in some locations. Good-looking, well-drawn exterior views are offset by some chunky, not-so-well-drawn interior screens.



THE MAGIC CIRCLE

7 Here you meet a group of wizard types who pretend to be country yokels. A semi-amusing conversation ensues with an example of true British tongue-in-cheekiness. When asked how he knows they are wizards, Simon replies: 'Well, when I move the mouse pointer over you it says "wizards"' (*American explanation: 'You have to secrete a special hormone to understand this joke. But British humour eh? -- bogus!'*)



THE GREENERY PART TWO

8 A lot of *Simon* is set in the green rolling hills of what could easily be the Yorkshire Dales or a bit of Wales. Here, Simon has a conversation with some proletarian woodworm, who moan about their low social standing and 37 kids and want some choice teak to eat. It's all very Monty Python. (*American pronunciation: 'Manty-pie-thaaan!'*)



BILLY GOATS GRUFF

9 *Simon* is a hotchpotch of all sorts of lore, fables, legends and fairy tales. Here's a quick example of the Billy goats gruff/troll/bridge parable. It's been rejigged by a pre-Madonna script-reading goat and a Socialist troll who goes on strike (placard and all) because he's not allowed to eat the goat. Mayhap you should whistle for help here?





A short (but literary) piece on fairy tales

Fairy tales are no longer the innocent, happily-ever-after bedtime yarns they used to be. Recent findings by psychologists (especially Bruno Bettelheim) and English professors have exposed a thick vein of symbolic subtext underneath the tales of wolves, evil stepmothers and (cough) dwarves.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, for example, the evil step-mother represents the heroine's potential for evil and vanity (they both stare in the magic mirror). Also, the step-mum stresses the 'unnaturalness' of non blood tied relations and the need for the daughter to separate herself from her mother's image. Stop me if I'm being too poncey... (You're being too poncey. Stop! Ed.) The dwarves in the same story allow the heroine to interact with men, but at the same time allow her to keep herself chaste for the prince (the dwarves are portrayed as young boys and so non-sexual). It's all very interesting - and only partially codswallop!

But do come, you can still be disappointed. The humour, (although British (i.e. marvellous) and derived from Pratchett and Python, pastiching Tolkien, Narnia and fairy tales) is a bit suspect in places. The writers have obviously concentrated on one-liners and punch-lines, instead of putting a bit more effort into characters and comic situations. Conversations, too, are milked to death. The magician's circle and Billy Goat Gruff sequences go on for far too long. You can butt in, cutting them short, but risk missing some vital info. Also, Simon's replies, though occasionally witty, are a bit kiddie and may not tickle seasoned adult comedy buds.

But gripes and sense of humour loss aside, *Simon* is a good-looking, challenging and, on the whole, respectable competitor to the Americanised graphic adventure market, typified by *Monkey Island*. I know. I know. I keep going on and on about that game, but when you've played *Monkey Island*, every other game shuffles into perspective. *Monkey Island* stands up like a big stone croquet stick on the lawn of gamesplaying, like a 60 foot Harryhausen dinosaur above the heaving bosoms of Raquel Welch, like a very tall thing surrounded by a multitude of smaller things. Games like *Legend of Kyrandia*, *Day of the Tentacle*, *The Last Crusade* and *Space Quest V* all bow and scrape and rub their chins on the floor in front of *Monkey Island*. *Simon*, too, I'm afraid, joins that long queue of not-quites, but we are pleased to say that it is certainly at least second in line to the throne, after *Fate of Atlantis*. And besides, any game with lines about the British culture icon of 1980 - namely Wagon Wheels - will get a thumbs up and a PC Zone Recommended from us. ☑

(Top) A few choice specimens can be borrowed from the Druid's Emporium.

(Right) The palaeontologist in the hole has just called Simon a 'philistine' after revealing his quest 'to find the missing link between man and vegetable'.

PC ZONE score

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

86

Price: £39.99 Out: 27 September
Published: Adventuresoft UK Ltd.
Telephone: PDQ. 021 625 3377

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 10MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 10Mb
Minimum Graphics: 256 colour VGA or MCGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland and compatibles
Controls: Mouse only
Comments: Needs DOS 3.2 or higher, BM AT and 100% compatibles and IBM BS2.



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THE

SIDE OF
SOFTWARE

Laurence Scotford finds evidence that the age of the CD has finally arrived, and is pleased to see that software publishers are at last putting CDs to good use.



NE SWALLOW does not a summer make. Try telling that to some of the game industry gurus. Better still, couch it in terms that will mean more to them: One 7th Guest does not a CD revolution make. I don't know about you, but I'm becoming tired of wading through endless articles in magazines and newspapers telling me that the era of CD gaming is finally upon us. If it is, I haven't seen much of it. Of course I can buy a CD drive ranging from £150 to £600 and upwards. Similarly I can find no end of electronic encyclopaedias, atlases and shareware bundles on CD. Is that what they mean by revolution? What rubbish!

It's time, we thought, to give readers the whys and wherefores of CD gaming, without the meaningless techno-bore waffle - tell it how it is, warts and all. So before you rush off to Woolies to get your part of the CD revolution, read on!



CDs can do all sorts of amazing things that weren't possible before, right?

Wrong, very wrong. There's nothing magical about CDs - they won't suddenly give your PC lots of amazing features it didn't have before. What they do give you is lots more storage space: each CD holds about the same amount of information as you'd get from 500 high density floppy disks. Essentially, this means that game designers can be lavish with graphics, sound and the overall size of the game because they'll have to work really hard to run out of space. In fact, there's usually so much space left that you'll find yourself getting lots of additional goodies like demos of other games and audio tracks.



So a CD drive works like a huge hard drive with interchangeable disks?

No, not exactly. CDs have two very major disadvantages that your hard drive doesn't have. Firstly, you can't write data to them as you can to your hard drive. This means that, not only will you be confined to using commercial software with your CD drive, but you'll also have to store saved game positions and configuration files on your hard drive. Secondly, CD drives are very, very slow - much slower than the least efficient hard drive.



I can get a CD drive for under £200. Should I?

While it's true that you can get into CD gaming for as little as this, if you are really serious about being able to play the forthcoming CD titles properly, then you should be prepared to shell out quite a bit more. Generally, paying more for a CD drive doesn't get you extra features but it does buy you extra speed. The cheaper drives are fine if you want to access the sort of software which isn't speed critical, like electronic encyclopaedias, atlases and so on (yawn), but not so good for games with a lot of sound and animation.

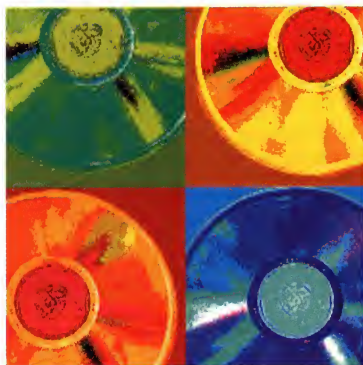
You certainly shouldn't buy anything which specifies an access time of more than 500ms or a sustained data throughput of less than 150Kb per second. If you're not sure what these figures mean, the best way to ensure that you aren't buying a white elephant is to get the salesman to demonstrate the drive playing something like *The 7th Guest* or one of the games reviewed in this feature. If animation looks at all slow or jerky or the sound begins to break up, you would be wise to shop around a bit more.



Are there different types of CD drive to choose between?

Yes, you will need to decide whether you want an internal or external drive. Internal drives are cheaper, but you will need a spare 5 1/4" drive bay. Either way, you will also need a spare expansion slot for the interface card, unless you already have a soundcard equipped with a suitable CD interface (if you do, make sure that the drive you buy is compatible with it).

Next you really have to decide whether or not you need a multisession, multi-spin drive. These are compatible with Kodak's Photo CD protocol, so you will have the added bonus of being able to use your drive to view



your favourite pictures. Be warned though that you will need at least an SVGA machine, and preferably one with 24-bit colour, if you are to use this feature properly.

And now a word of warning. There are still some older serial drives on the market; they are attractively priced and may have lots of features but they are too slow for playing games. Again, you are best advised to get a demo before you part with your hard earned readies.

If I buy a CD drive, does that make my PC a Multimedia PC?

Not necessarily. There are actually two standards for Multimedia PCs. To comply with Multimedia Level One, your machine must have the following: 386SX or better processor; 2Mb RAM; 30Mb hard disk; CD ROM drive with CD/DA outputs; 150Kb/second sustained transfer rate and maximum seek time of one second, using no more than 40% of the processor power; audio card; VGA or better (SVGA or better is strongly recommended).

Multimedia Level Two is even more exacting: 4Mb RAM; 25MHz 486SX or better; 160Mb Hard Drive; CD ROM drive with 300Kb/second sustained transfer rate, maximum average seek time of 400ms, XA ready and multisession capable; audio card delivering 16-bit digital sound, eight note synthesizer and MIDI playback; video card delivering 65,536 colours at a resolution of 640x480 pixels; MIDI I/O and joystick port. This specification also recommends: 8Mb RAM; a CD drive with 64Kb on-board buffer; CD ROM XA audio ability; audio card supporting TMA adopted ADPCM algorithm; video card delivering 1.2 megapixels/second, given 40% of CPU bandwidth.

As the hardware gets better, more advanced levels will be introduced. If your machine doesn't quite meet either of the specifications above, it won't definitely prevent you from playing Multimedia games but you shouldn't be disappointed if they don't run well, or you don't get all the advertised features.

Help! I've already bought a CD drive and it's extremely slow. What can I do?

If you are technically inclined, take another look at your CD drive's documentation and find out how to set up a large buffer. Then, set up the biggest memory buffer you can – the bigger the buffer, the faster your drive will be. If that still doesn't help, you might want to consider investing in a caching program. We've been using *CacheAll* from Foxpro computers (081 882 1874) which is probably the best caching program available for use with CD ROM drives. This is because it uses free hard disk space as well as memory for caching. The only trouble with caching programs is that they work best with programs that use the same data repeatedly, so you will get the best results with action and strategy games, but not that much improvement with adventure games, which use most data only once.

Once I've bought a CD ROM drive, what software can I get for it?

As I pointed out earlier, there is no end of 'serious' applications on CD, but good games have been a little scarce up to now. Yes, there has been a healthy crop of compilations and shovelware (disk-based games that have been transferred to CD as is) but a distinct lack of dedicated releases. In the coming months, however, you can expect to see that situation changing. In the next few pages we have taken a look at some of the recent releases, including Sierra's first true Multimedia game.



Laurence Scotford takes a long hard look at a selection of the latest games to be given the CD treatment, while Paul Presley's heart is finally won over to Sierra's Roberta Williams by the Multimedia version of *Kings Quest VI*.

ERIC THE UNREADY



IT QUICKLY BECOMES apparent that Legend have intended this CD to be nothing more than an alternative to the disk-based version. Not only is *Eric the Unready* on CD totally devoid of enhancements, but it offers you the option of installing the game's artwork on your hard disk. This, I imagine, has been done to make the game usable with even the slowest of drives, though it shouldn't be necessary for most drives. Even without the pictures, the game takes

up an inordinate amount of hard disk space. This adventure, all about the trials and tribulations of an inept knight, uses Legend's idiosyncratic interface, which is a fairly unwieldy halfway house between a text and graphic interface. If you've played any *Magnetic Scrolls* adventures, you'll have a good idea what to expect.

I'd only really recommend this if you've played a Legend adventure before, and are sure that you like them. Having said that, I can assure you that, if you do like this sort of thing, the humour more than makes up for the sticky interface.



Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.



specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 12MHz **Installation:** Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 3Mb **Minimum Graphics:** VGA
Soundcards Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland MT-32
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

Price: £34.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Accolade **Telephone:** 081 877 0880

'Lorks, is that an eye on the end of your stick?'



Therefore did Eric consult that most ancient and sacred tome of chivalry, "HOW TO JOUST."

DUNE



THE ORIGINAL version of *Dune* wasn't the most timely license: the book was written back in 1965 and even David

Lynch's flawed film is eight years old. This may have worked in its favour though, because the French development team, Cryo, wasn't under any particular pressure to get the game out quickly. They came up with a very original format in the shape of a strange mix of adventure game and strategy game. It didn't appeal to everybody, but players who had enjoyed earlier enigmatic releases from the designers, for instance, *Purple Saturn Day* and *Kult*, were not disappointed.

As Paul Atreides, your aim is to set up a successful spice mining operation on the planet Arrakis, and then attack the evil Harkonnen clan, driving them from the planet.

This CD version of the game has speech throughout and, although the delivery is totally lacking emotion, it does lend the game a lot more atmosphere. Cryo have also improved the animated sequences in the game and added footage from the film.

Although not the most demanding game you'll ever play, it still offers a few good hours of entertainment, and shows how a disk-based game can be considerably enhanced for CD.

The disk based version of *Dune* was reviewed as part of *The Greatest* compilation in issue three.



A good game made into a great game for CD.



Specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 16MHz **Installation:** Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb **Minimum Graphics:** VGA
Soundcards Supported: Ad-Lib, Roland MT-32, & LAPC-1,
Sound Blaster **Controls:** Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £44.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Virgin Games **Telephone:** 081 960 2255



In the future all things will be of purple hue.



If I see one more bowl of Frosties I swear I'll quit this job for good.



RINGWORLD



THE DISK BASED version of Tsunami's premiere adventure game was very well received, and rightly so. The team had captured the spirit of Larry Niven's *Ringworld* novels perfectly. The interface was also a considerable improvement over the Sierra Creative Interface. Why that should be relevant becomes apparent when you understand that Tsunami is a splinter group from Sierra.

The adventure has been designed as a continuation of the storyline in the original books. Two humans and an exiled member of the lion-like Kzinti race explore the artificial Ringworld in an attempt to thwart the plans of the Patriarch of Kzin, who wants to exterminate the Pierson's Puppeteers race and restart the man-kzin wars using the most powerful ship in the galaxy.

The CD incarnation of *Ringworld* is disappointing since the game hasn't been changed at all. It even has the original copy protection! Replacing

the text throughout the game with digitised speech would have added so much atmosphere. Even a few additional sound effects wouldn't have gone amiss. But what you get is identical to the disk version. There's a paperback copy of *Ringworld* thrown in, but then the disk version had that too.

The extras you do get for your money are rolling demos of *Blue Force* and *Protostar* and a few audio tracks on the CD, most of which are in-game music. You will listen to them once and then not bother again. The one item worth having is a very long interview with Larry Niven in which he spouts on about his life, work, the theories behind *Ringworld* and space exploration in general. It's the sort of stuff that Niven fans will kill for, and it almost makes up for the deficiency of this package in other respects. There's no point in having this if you've played the disk version, but if you haven't, get this version for preference.

The disk-based version of *Ringworld* was reviewed in issue two.



An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!



Specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 16MHz **Installation:** Essential
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb **Minimum Graphics:** VGA
Soundcards Supported: Ad-Lib, Pro Audio Spectrum, Roland MT-32, Roland LAPC-1, Sound Blaster **Controls:** Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £39.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Tsunami/Accolade **Telephone:** 081 877 0880



KING'S QUEST VI MULTIMEDIA



AS FAR AS I CAN remember there hasn't actually been a true multimedia computer game yet, but *King's Quest VI* comes very, very close. It's certainly a multimedia package as not only do you get a vastly enhanced version of the game (which I will come to in a moment) you get a Windows-run video about the making of the game, a selection of artwork from the game to marvel at, a selection of demos previewing forthcoming Sierra games and the necessary software to link you to The Sierra Network – a modem-based gaming community that unfortunately isn't yet available in this country. So let's make a list. Computers: the game and the demos; Video: the making of the game, the Windows version of the game's intro sequence and a special game preview; Artwork: the art gallery; Telephone: The Sierra Network software (sadly not usable, but it was a nice gesture). Four types of information presentation in the one package and on one compact disc. Now *that's* multimedia!

There are in fact two versions of the game on the disc. The first is for those of you without Windows 3.x that have to run it all from DOS. The second is for those of you with the full Multimedia PC setup (yes, I know what I said earlier but, unfortunately,

in the short space of time it's taken you to read from there to here not much has changed, so I'm having to play by their rules until they wise up). There's not much to separate the two; except that using Windows you get an even more enhanced intro sequence and all of the extra Windows video goodies. It even updates your own version of the Media Player accessory to include the video player extensions. How nice.

Speaking of the intro sequence, I'll admit to being pleasantly satisfied with the new one... Oh sod it. This is possibly the finest piece of animation I have ever, ever (ever) seen in a computer game – ever. It's breathtaking, it's beautiful, it's a visual masterpiece, it's as good as finding out the milkman has left you two pints of Gold Top instead of that watery semi-skimmed stuff.

Now I know that I'm the first person to start touting the merits of the 'graphics do not maketh the game' lesson, but the fact that I was so stunned by this sequence gives rise to another theory I'm working on. Let's say, purely for the sake of argument, that we don't treat this as a game but as a story, being told on your computer. Let's not judge the game by how much the player gets involved but by how good the story is and how well it's presented to you. Let's treat it like a film. This, after all, is how the American market seems



Oh, wonderful a new member, welcome to our annual Slimmers Club Disco.

to view their games and they seem to be doing pretty well by it. This being the case, *King's Quest VI Multimedia* is quite possibly the finest story ever produced.

So, is there anything wrong with the game? Well there are the usual technical problems to deal with. In fact I'm beginning to wish I'd never bought that damned CD ROM drive. It's been nothing but trouble ever since it was installed. The biggest problem is that the software drivers take up so much RAM there's never enough left to run the smegging games. *King's Quest VI* is a case in point. I had so much trouble getting this up and running that even using its 'Make Boot Disk' option (a feature I was overjoyed to see) wouldn't get it to run. I had to mess around with the system files myself: always a terrifying experience.

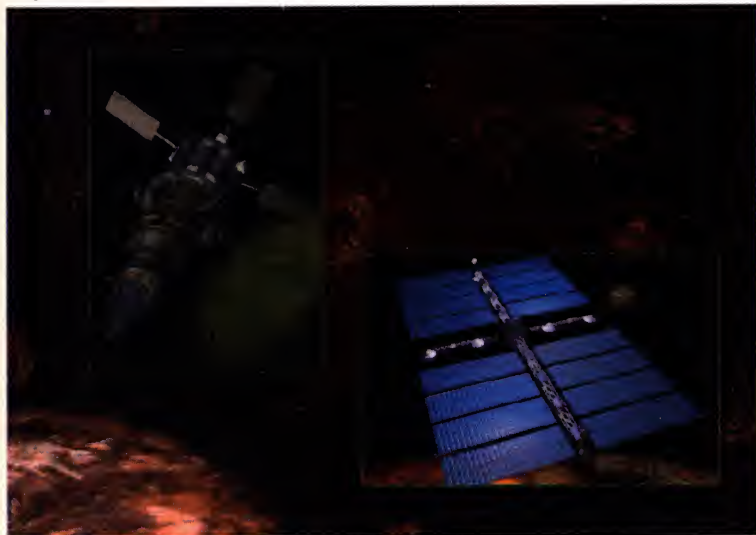
Apart from that, the only other thing wrong with the game is that, frankly, the actual story doesn't appeal to me very much. I've never been a big fan of the *King's Quest* range, but I can see that they have their own audience and Sierra cater for it perfectly. If there is such a

thing as the computer family of the '90s, this is the perfect product. Mom and Pop can gather little Bradley and Chelsea around the monitor and engage their young minds (the kids that is, not the parents) in what can only be described as the fairy stories of the modern age.

I dislike the phrase 'This really shows you what a CD can do' as, let's face it, a CD can do just about anything. You can use it as a mat for a cup of coffee. You can use it as a Frisbee substitute. This is, however, an excellent CD-based product and the first true use of the term 'multimedia'. For roughly the same price as the floppy version, you get just so much more. This feels like a value for money package and, with the unfortunate exception of the Sierra Network not being usable, it is.

Like I said, it was just the story that didn't appeal to me very much and I think I'll wait awhile until something a little more meaty comes along. But, providing Sierra can stick to this level of quality (and content) with its future CD range, you'll be looking at a very happy monkey indeed.

In space no one can hear you drop large pieces of scrap metal.



Excellent use of a CD, despite the 'soft' story.

SCORE

90

Specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb

Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 16MHz Installation: Optional

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 0Mb Minimum Graphics: VGA (256 colours if using Windows) Soundcards Supported: Any with DAC support, Roland MT-32/LAPC-1 Controls: Mouse

Price: £49.99 Out: Out Publisher: Sierra Telephone: 0734 303322

LEGEND OF KYRANDIA



WESTWOOD STUDIOS made quite a splash with its debut adventure *Legend of Kyrandia*. This graphical

extravaganza is very much in the *King's Quest* mould, but with a dash less sickly-sweet tweezeness. The plot is a typical 'evil runs riot and threatens the peace-loving land' type of affair, and has you in the role of naïve hero Brandon.

Again, for the CD version, Westwood have included speech throughout the game, but for once the acting, while not likely to win any Oscars, is not half bad. The voices do at least have some recognisable emotion in them.

The graphics throughout the game are nothing short of stunning, and although the interface is less than intuitive and the puzzles are a little too easy, this is a game worth having if you are a fan of graphic adventures.



Stunning to look at, but not challenging if you've played a lot of adventures before.

SCORE

82

specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb **Minimum**

Processor: 386 **Minimum Speed:** 16MHz

Installation: Essential **Minimum Hard Disk Space:** 1Mb **Minimum**

Graphics: VGA, MCGA **Soundcards Supported:** Sound Blaster & Pro,

Ad-Lib, Ad-Lib Gold, Pro Audio Spectrum, Roland MT-32 & LAPC-1

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse **Comments:** Needs DOS 5.0 or better

Price: £44.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Virgin Games **Telephone:** 081 960 2255

Laverne suddenly remembered that she'd left the bath running.



DAY OF THE TENTACLE



YOU'LL HAVE TO try pretty hard to miss this one. It comes in what is probably the most outrageous software packaging

to date: it resembles an oversized, purple Toblerone. Inside there's an abundance of empty space, but you do at least get a hint book which wasn't available with the first, disk-based version.

The CD version plays in an identical fashion to the disk-based game, with one very major exception. It has speech all the way through, rather than just during the intro. Whether or not you think this enhances the game depends on how well you get on with the deadpan delivery. I love it, but it's a very personal thing.

To give you that extra bit of value for money, LucasArts have included rolling demos of forthcoming CD talkies: *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*, *Sam and Max* (another cartoon-style adventure), and – wait for it – the much anticipated *Rebel Assault*. Strangely, there's also a demo of *Day of the Tentacle* too!

Day of the Tentacle is a sequel to *Maniac Mansion*: Lucasfilm's first game to use the SCUMM system. Indeed, you can actually play the original adventure as a game within a game. Unfortunately it's so full of American college humour that it's not as accessible as the two *Monkey Island* games. Even so, it definitely has its moments and the animation is stunning.

The disk based version of *Day of the Tentacle* was reviewed in issue six.



Sickening isn't it? All that land lying around being unproductive when it could be turned into shopping centres and business premises.

A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

SCORE
87

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286, 386

recommended Minimum Speed: 16MHz **Installation:** Essential

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb **Minimum Graphics:** VGA

Soundcards Supported: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £45.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Lucasfilm/US Gold **Telephone:** 021 625 3388





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The Annual Baseball Match at The New York Hospital for the Treatment of Jaundice.

Hardball

ON NO ACCOUNT confuse this game with the excellent *Hardball 3*. This is the original *Hardball*. Until I loaded it up, I'd forgotten how much I used to hate the *Hardball* series. I don't know why it's on the Hit squad – it wasn't a hit the first time around.

There are two approaches to releasing a budget game: (a) Right chaps, we've just made a corker of an upgrade to what was a pretty good game in the first place; let's release it on a budget label and give people who can't afford the new version a chance to play the original; or (b) Nobody's going to be stupid enough to buy this anymore, let's see if we can get a few more quid by releasing it on a budget label.

This falls into the second category. (Allegedly, PC Zone lawyers.) There are only two fictitious teams to play against each other, over and over again in games that mean nothing, like a baseball version of purgatory. There's a choice of CGA or EGA graphics and internal PC speaker sound, complete with a traditional God-awful signature tune. The graphics are poor, even by EGA standards, and the gameplay sucks big-style. Every pitcher has the same four pitches, every hit goes all the way to the outfield wall, and the animation is poor. The flight of the ball defies science, logic and gravity.

If you want to play jerky, slow-motion baseball between two fictional and unchanging teams on a pitch that looks as if someone has vomited hundreds and thousands all over it, this is probably very much for you. The rest of us will be tired of it within the first ten minutes. I'd love to know who's supposed to have come up with the unattributed quotes on the cover. Okay, it's a budget game, so you don't expect great things, but this is as much fun as running a cheese-grater down the inside of your thighs. Patrick McCarthy

Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

SCORE

20

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: Floppy or hard discs

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb Minimum Graphics: CGA

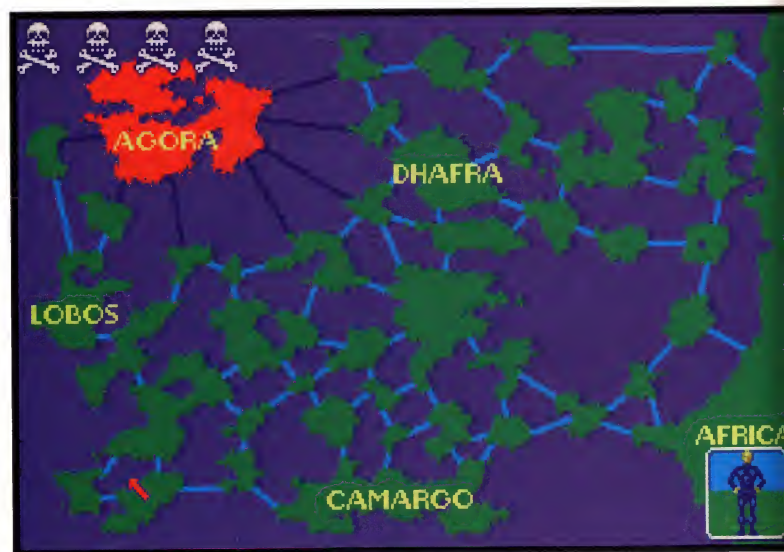
Sound Cards Supported: None

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

Price: £12.99 Out: Now Publisher: Hit Squad Telephone: Ocean 061 832 6633



It comes as no surprise that this character's sex appeal is excellent. Eat your heart out Prince.



Kind of makes the Channel Tunnel look a bit unambitious doesn't it?



Lord love a duck, it's a bloomin' giant.

Our reviewers are becoming quite famous for their penny-pinching and all round meanness. They've actually challenged each other to see who can last an entire year without buying a single drink. Understandably, then, they know a thing or two about budget games.



Our boss, a man with a nice line in information icons and narrow black ties.



Our mission, should you decide to accept it...



Missile homes in on an innocent passer-by. Over react? Me? Never.



Flames of Freedom

FLAMES OF FREEDOM is the sequel to *MidWinter*, a famous hallmark game, which was 1991's Most Amazing Game Ever (Or At Least Until The Next Amazing One Comes Out). It was basically a large scale strategy game but with large vector-graphicked arcade chunks thrown in. *Flames* followed on, both in plot and style, transplanting the snowy tundra landscape into a sub-tropical environment, expanding, inflating and deepening the original game (in the way that sequels do). The premise is that you, leader of a pack of fearless islanders, must protect their homeland archipelagos from a Saharan Empire invasion. As the evil Empire's influence gradually creeps across your island map like a virus, you mobilise the defence by convincing other islands to join your cause, plan attacks (strategy) and then actually carry out the raids (arcade bits) with all manner of vehicles and weaponry.

The range of these vehicles and hardware is large: from biplanes to lorries, jets to balloons, speedboats to jetpacks, submarines to your trusty old feet – all can be flown, piloted and used offensively against the opposition. Not that you'll get a chance to straight away, as most of the more esoteric modes of transport (zeppelins, gliders etc.) have to be 'borrowed' from the islands you come across. The enemy, too, have a similar menagerie at their disposal, so the practice 'flying and fighting' option on the menu is absolutely essential for a successful campaign.

The route to ultimate victory, however, is compounded by two things. Firstly, the landscape is a dauntingly large combo of savannah and water. The autopilot option allows you to master the terrain somewhat but even this is compounded by the second thing – mouse control. *Flames of Freedom* uses a strange mouse control system whereby forward is the left button and the right button elevates you up and down. This is fine when you're trekking around on foot, but as soon as you get in a pilot's seat it's a different matter. It's a nightmare. Also, the game was originally designed for the 8MHz STS and Amigas, and so plays uncontrollably fast on anything 386 and up. Also, vector graphics (especially in EGA) are a bit 'aged' these days. *Flames of Freedom* is certainly dated. Not as dated as, say, a Morris dancer at a rave, but its 16-colour graphics and overwhelming depth put it around the 'fluorescent green socks/Spandau Ballet' mark on the Crap-Youth-Culture-Metaphor-O-Meter. It might give modern 'stragetist' and 'arcades' a long, interesting week of fun, but when everything is down to mouse control and MHz speed, don't expect too many thrills and spills. *David McCandless*

A bit old, a bit saggy, but will give purists much fun.

SCORE

70

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 6MHz **Installation:** Essential

Minimum Hard Disk Space: N/A **Minimum Graphics:** VGA/MCGA

Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Tandy

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

Price: £9.99 **Out:** Date **Publisher:** Kixx **Telephone:** 021 625 3388



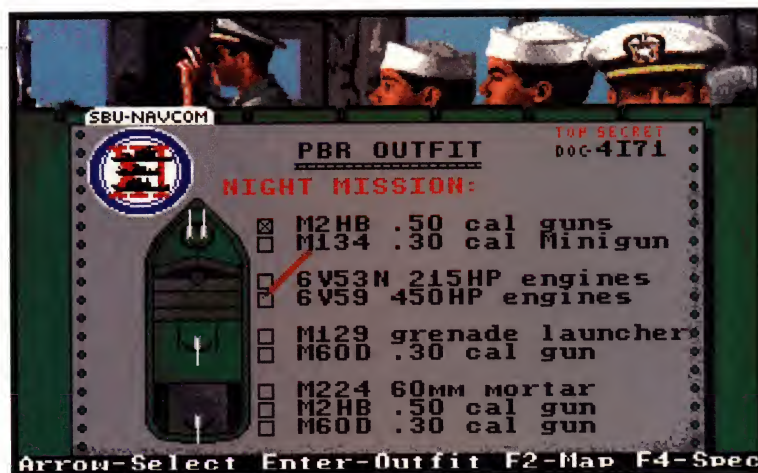
This is a map, er, of Vietnam... and some rivers... and towns. (You're not really trying are you? Ed.)



Two full fuel tanks, no damage and not an enemy in sight. This must be the start of the mission.



Introducing Vietnamese peasant farmers to the benefits of Western democracy.



Choosing the equipment essential for the mission ahead. I think I'll have the hat on the right.

Gunboat

ON THE AMIGA this game was one of the great disappointments of my life. The scenario was so appealing: guiding a motor patrol boat through the waterways of Vietnam, Columbia and Panama whilst carrying out a wide range of insurgency missions, such as destroying arms depots, dropping off agents and rescuing pows. The game promised atmosphere and excitement. It delivered jerkiness, a sluggish control system and, ultimately, frustration. So I approached the PC version with something less than enthusiasm.

Gunboat is devoid of thrills. After contemplating (and rejecting) the chance to train up on the killing arts of gunnery, grenade launching or the altogether more socially acceptable piloting, you report for duty. Here you choose from a selection of between two and eight missions and then indulge in a limited tooling up section.

The missions themselves are all much of a muchness, involving manoeuvring your patrol boat through a maze of rivers shooting practically everything including enemy troops, mines and some horse-camel type things (which don't do you any harm but are just too tempting for words). On completing your mission a simple press on the tab key magically transports you back to base.

Although the game doesn't suffer from the slow response time of the Amiga version it does have all the other problems such as rudimentary graphics and sound. The worst flaw is the control system. You can simply play the game from the bridge of the boat, setting all guns on auto fire but you don't buy something called *Gunboat* simply to hone your steering skills. If you elect to do some gunning for yourself then there's no auto pilot for the boat. While you're manning the guns it just continues in a straight line until hitting the shore and sinking.

Despite the interesting idea and budget price *Gunboat* still fails to make a great impact. It's relatively playable but far from addictive. If you like the idea of taking charge of a team of specially trained insurgency troops then try MicroProse's *Special Forces* (free to subscribers plug plug) or Electronic Arts' *Seal Team*. Anthony Soares

A better idea than game.

SCORE

54

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: Optional
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb Minimum Graphics: CGA
Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

Price: £14.99 Out: Now Publisher: Hit Squad Telephone: Ocean 061 832 6633

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Below: The easy bit.
Right: The difficult bit.



LHX Attack Chopper

ONE OF THE WORST mistakes any software company can make is to release a duff game which happens to be endowed with a double entendre name – just look at *PP Hammer And His Pneumatic Weapon*. Rather fortunate, then, that despite its name – which would have been thoroughly exploited by a writer more immature than myself – *LHX Attack Chopper* is quite a good game.

Flight sims aren't usually my favourite genre, largely because there tends to be wads of documentation, and I end up crashing after three nanoseconds. However, this helicopter game is, in some respects, much more accessible than your average jet sim. For example, taking off is much easier because basically all you need do is turn on the propeller. That's not to say that *LHX Attack Chopper* is a shandy-drinker's flight-sim: indeed on the highest difficulty level, only paraffin-swilling ex-marines need apply.

Graphically, while not exactly of *Strike Commander* standard, *LHX Attack Chopper* is more than acceptable. Each of the four helicopters you can choose to fly looks suitably violent when viewed from the external camera, and, on the 286 I was using, the 3D was pretty smooth and didn't noticeably slow down when lots started to happen at once.

There aren't many helicopter games around in a market obsessed with F-19s and F-16s, and *LHX Attack Chopper* was widely acclaimed when first released. It hasn't really aged and now that it costs a mere 15 quid, the only possible recommendation is: 'Buy it'. *Toby Finlay*

Still one of the classic flight sims.

SCORE

88

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286

Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: Floppy or hard discs

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 1Mb Minimum Graphics: CGA

Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Tandy

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

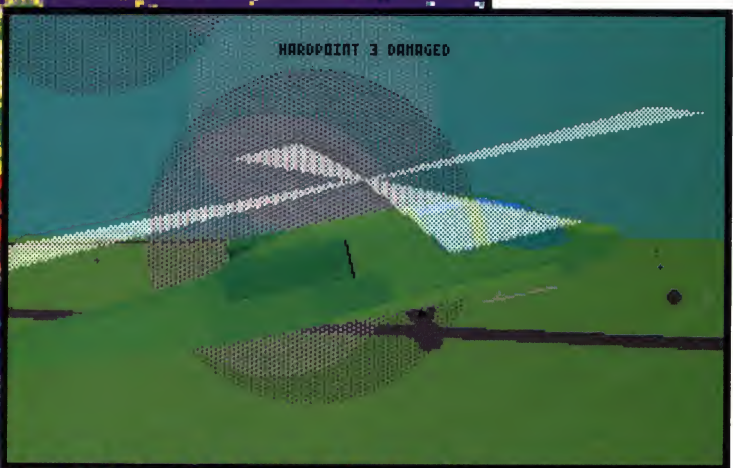
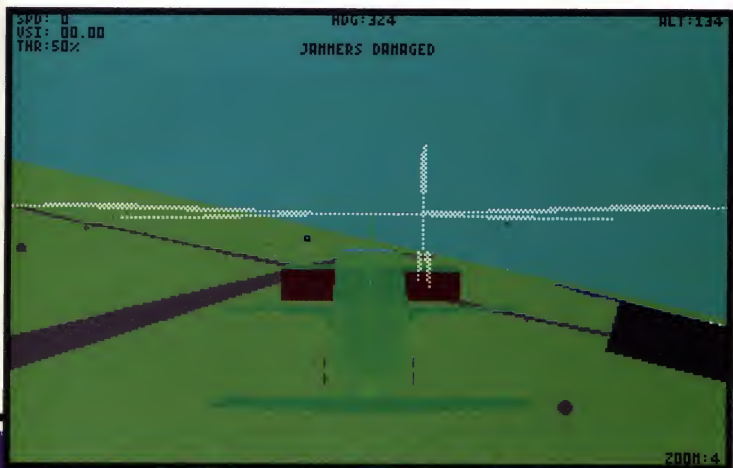
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Libya

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++ TOUR -- LEVEL ++ DONE



Difficulty 3 (medium)



Enemies are average

The enemies are average.
It's you that's the
nightmare.



Fantasy land, where a chap can hang around the quayside in a long dress and not get beaten up.



Looks as if the Elders are busy.

The Elders are always busy, that's the tragedy of being a child.

Loom

WHEN LOOM WAS ORIGINALLY released by Lucasfilm a couple of years ago it was widely praised for its atmosphere and graphics, and widely chortled at for its simplistic gameplay. The decision to repackage it after Lucasfilm broke the graphic adventure mould with the likes of *Monkey Island* is a bit surprising, because the gameplay will obviously look even more lacklustre now. The atmosphere, however, has retained its charm and the storyline is as lunch-throwsingly cute as ever; the central character is named Bobbin Threadbare and is a member of the so-called Guild of Weavers. When Loom was first released it was accompanied by an audio cassette which recounted the story so far, but the tape is nowhere to be seen in this budget version so I'll very quickly outline the scene as I remember it from the original. The Weavers have been ostracised by the other Guilds and live on an island worrying that the world will soon end. Bobbin was born at the wrong time in the wrong place (seen as a bad omen) and adopted by an old crone after his mother was turned into a duck as a cruel and heartless punishment by the Elders. (It's a swan actually. Ed.) Wanting revenge, 17 years later the demon duck returns and transports the Elders to a void. Enter Bobbin.

The aim of the game is to find them, assisted by a staff with which you can cast spells. There are no 'puzzles' as such; there's no inventory and no Lucasfilm verb-list at the bottom of the screen. The gameplay consists largely of collecting spells and working out where to use them. Spells are represented as musical notes, so if you click on a pot of green dye, you'll hear a simple tune. Select another object and recreate the tune by clicking on different sections of the staff and you'll cast a dyeing spell. On the practice level the notes appear for you; this makes the whole affair, for want of a better phrase, a piece of piss. However, on hard-lad mode you have to do everything by ear.

And that's basically all there is to it. If you like a challenge then steer clear because it's just too easy. If you like a good story then it's highly recommended, because its atmosphere and price make up for the lack of longevity. *Toby Finlay*

Simple and enchanting adventure; ideal for beginners.

SCORE

72

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 8086

Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: Floppy or hard disk

Minimum Hard Disk Space: 3Mb Minimum Graphics: CGA

Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Game Blaster

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £14.99 Out: Now Publisher: Kixx Telephone: 021 625 3388

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F-15 Strike Eagle II

GOOD OLD MICROPROSE. Some of its recent flight sims may have been a bit on the duff side, but in its time the company has produced a wealth of classics and this was once one of them. So what do you get for your 17 quid? Let's start with the packaging, which is excellent for a budget game: full size box, full size manual (136 pages) and an A5 technical reference booklet which also contains the maps for the six war zones in the game.

So what of the game itself? Well, essentially *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is an arcade flight sim, meaning it's not overly high on realism but is choc full of action, with all the war zones providing a target rich environment, both in the air and on the ground. You fly missions, earn medals and get promoted. Your weapons? The AMRAAM medium range radar guided air-to-air, the AIM-9M short range, infra-red air-to-air and the AGM-65D Maverick air-to-ground 'fire and forget'. The other aircraft in the game include the Falcon, Hornet, Intruder, Harrier and a list of MiGs as long as a windsock. There's a wide choice of war zones too: Middle East, Libya, Persian Gulf and Vietnam.

You won't find any texture mapping or 'guru' shading in *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, but what there is well defined, good to look at and gives a realistic impression of both altitude and speed. And, of course, the usual MicroProse compendium of exterior views is at hand. There's even a 'director mode' that switches views automatically (for instance if someone fires a SAM at you, the viewpoint will pop to the ground and you'll see it happen). *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is, at the end of the day, good old-fashioned fun with no over-complicated frills - ideal for a novice to cut his or her flying teeth on. Good fun at a great price. *Duncan MacDonald*

It still holds its own in a dogfight.

SCORE

85

specs

Minimum Memory: 512K

Minimum Processor: 286

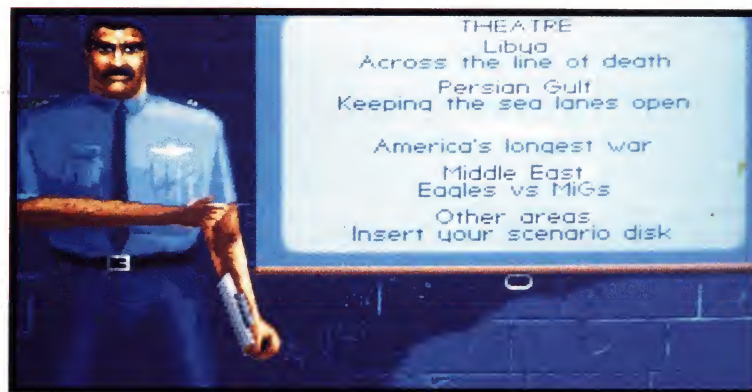
Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: Optional

Minimum Hard Disk Space: N/A Minimum Graphics: CGA

Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib

Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

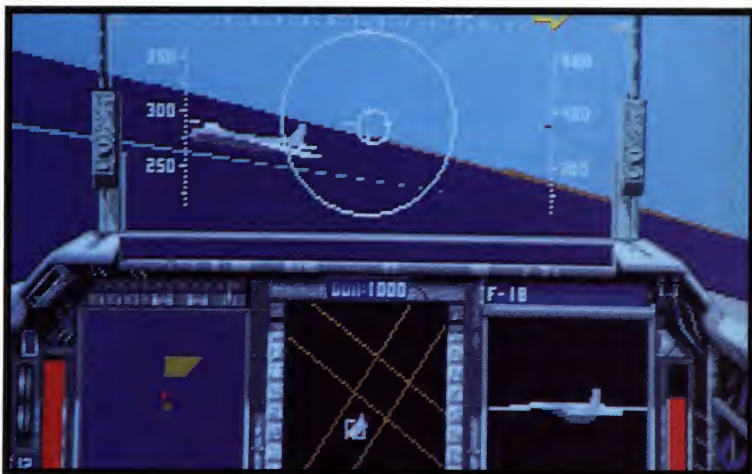
Price: £16.99 Out: Now Publisher: Kixx Telephone: US Gold 021 625 3388



Blimey, it's Merv Hughes!



In their spare time F-15s hang around runways and look hard.



Someone's going to have a rotten Christmas this year.



The most time consuming part of any game, where you agonise for hours over a funny name.



Another glorious moment in flight history as the cream of PC Zone pilots overshoots his target.



An unusually tastefully clad golfer hits an unusually inaccurate shot.

Mean 18

THERE'S LITTLE MORE IRRITATING than a game's packaging being emblazoned with highly complementary review quotes from mysteriously unnamed authors. Still worse is a highly complementary and anonymous quote that is patent drivel. Like this one for *Mean 18*: 'The graphics and sound are excellent.' Yar, right. Maybe they were in 1986 when the game was first released, but in 1993 it is most certainly an ugly duckling.

This review, however, isn't going to be a slag-job since, aesthetically-challenged as *Mean 18* is, it's by no means a bad game. What it offers for a tanner is a no-frills golf-sim which, though providing none of the goodies to be found amid the likes of *PGA Tour Golf* or *Links 386 Pro*, at least avoids the hour-long screen updates. Its easily accessible system and playability compensate for its anachronistic nature, and the course-designer gives you something to do if you get bored.

Most of the stuff you'd normally find in a golf game is here: varying terrain, wind factors and so on - although the ground seems to be entirely flat, which makes putting pretty simple. Oh, and there's the small fact that even if you've been tapping the ball around the flag for hours and are 400 over par, when you finally hole it with a one-inch shot, the computer comments 'Nice putt!' Still, computers, rather like Jim Rosenthal, were never heralded for their sporting knowledge.

Obviously, if you already have access to *PGA Tour* or *Links* then forget it, but if you're too skint or have too basic a system to run either, give *Mean 18* a whirl. It's playable and has the added bonus of a whole host of custom courses available on Compuserve. *Toby Finlay*

Reasonable mid-table golf game.

SCORE

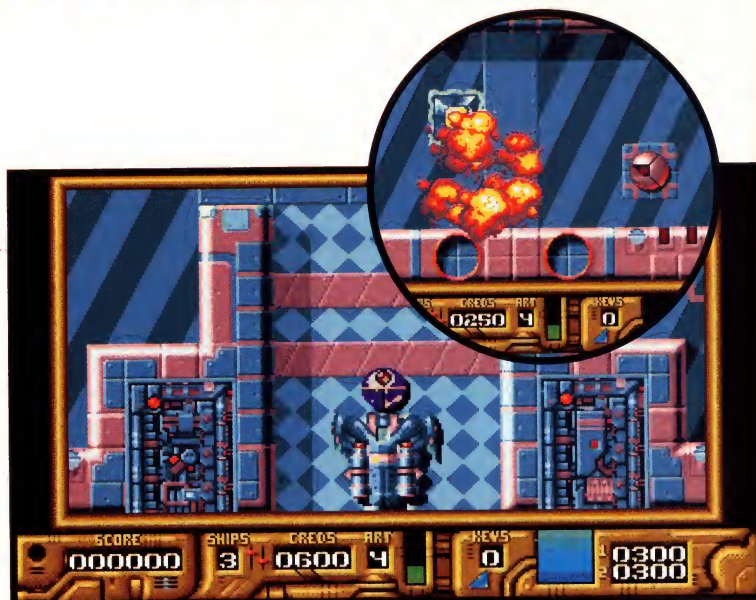
60

specs

Minimum Memory: 256K
Minimum Processor: 8086

Minimum Speed: 6MHz Installation: No
Minimum Hard Disk Space: N/A Minimum Graphics: RGB Mono
Sound Cards Supported: N/A
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick

Price: £9.99 Out: Now Publisher: Hit Squad Telephone: Ocean 061 832 6633



Rats learn the perils of building a nest too near to Sellafeld.

Galactic Warrior Rats

NOW THIS IS WHAT I call a real budget game: it costs ten quid, the price of old Spectrum or Commodore 64 fare, and it plays like a Spectrum or Commodore 64 game too, come to that. There's nothing particularly slick or clever going on, it's totally unoriginal, but it's just addictive in good old-fashioned 'leave your brain in neutral' style. The idea is that you play three rats, who were on board a spaceship. The spaceship crashed onto the surface of a planet and the reactor engine exploded, mutating the rats in question and killing everyone else on board. The rats discover that the planet they're now stuck on is ear-marked for destruction because it's so polluted, and that there's a countdown in progress (but luckily quite a long one).

To save their hides, the rats have to travel around the surface in their little, blobby looking attack ships, kill all the defence droids, and ultimately shut down the planet's computer complex. Every time a defence droid is killed it either drops a bit of dosh or a key, which is picked up on contact. The dosh can be used to upgrade the rats' weaponry, and the keys - as you'll have guessed - are for gaining access to otherwise unreachable areas. Scattered about the many levels are computer consoles which, when touched, will either show the rats a map of their immediate area or enable them to spend their collected cash (yes, in 'the shop'). Also scattered about (and to make the mazes that bit harder to complete) are warp tiles which zap the rats to other locations. The game plays with you controlling one rat at a time: if it gets killed, you switch to the next. And then the next. And then it's game over.

You've heard it all before, and you've seen it all before, and before playing the game I thought: 'Snooze city, I wish I was doing something else more interesting'. However, as is the nature with simple maze games cum shoot 'em-ups of this ilk, and like I said at the beginning of this review, *Galactic Warrior Rats* is spookily addictive. The bird's eye view graphics are basic and blocky, the scrolling is a tad on the flickery side and the sound isn't really anything to write home about either, but it doesn't really matter. Just like it didn't matter that Spectrum games of this type were rendered in seven hideously clashing colours and the internal speaker occasionally made funny beeping noises. Blimey, I've suddenly come over all nostalgic over my old Spectrum. I'd better not overmark *Galactic Warrior Rats* though, because a game like this might easily pop up on public domain, and that won't cost you diddly squat. Still, ten quid's not exactly going to break anyone's bank, is it? (Unless you're on the old 'Nat King Cole', in which case it's two weeks food money.) *Duncan MacDonald*

Totally simple, totally basic, but fun nevertheless.

SCORE

75

specs

Minimum Memory: 512K
Minimum Processor: 8086

Minimum Speed: 12MHz Installation: No
Minimum Hard Disk Space: N/A Minimum Graphics: EGA
Sound Cards Supported: N/A
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

Price: £9.99 Out: Now Publisher: Summit Telephone: Alternative Software 0977 797777

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Blueprint

Starlord

PUBLISHER: MicroProse

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 0666 504 326

OUT: Now

It started life as a Play By Mail game. Now it's set to be a full-blown PC game complete with 3D space combat and a genetic subsystem. **Paul Lakin** buys a book of first class stamps and goes to check out *Starlord*.



IN THE BEGINNING, dearly beloved, in a time not 15 years ago, when football shirts were relatively tasteful, Paul Weller was still making great music and the height of computer game sophistication was *Hangman* with four syllables, there was a Play By Mail game known as *Starlord*. And the wise and the learned respected this game, even if some of them did not understand all its ways. And, dearly beloved, the people throughout the land thought the game was 'skill' and spent their money on stamps (which in those innocent days were but two shillings for a book of ten) so that they could be a part of it.

The wise man, nay guru, behind this game was known as Mike Singleton who would go forward to produce works of such legendary status as *Midwinter* and *Flames of Freedom* and be worshipped by those both clean and unclean. There was much chanting and singing and washing of private parts. And yet some people were disenchanted and would whinge (in a whiney sort of way): 'What of *Starlord*, for we could do with more

of that matey'. So the great Singleton, who knew much mystic lore, unleashed a plague of boils and they were all struck down and in much need of Germolene.

Okay, I made up the bit about the boils and Germolene but the rest is fairly accurate. In fact Mike Singleton has been looking to develop a computer game version of *Starlord* for some years, though it is only since February 1992 that he's been working on it in a formal manner. Since September of that year the project has been continued under the auspices of MicroProse, whose in-house team have provided some of the artwork. However the bulk of the programming has been done by Mike Singleton and Peter Barnett who have worked together on games such as *Midwinter* and *Flames of Freedom*. (I'm on a five for each time I mention those games in my copy!)

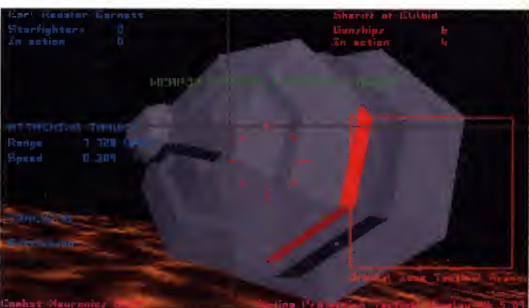
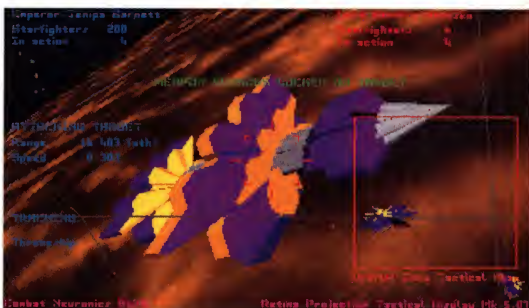
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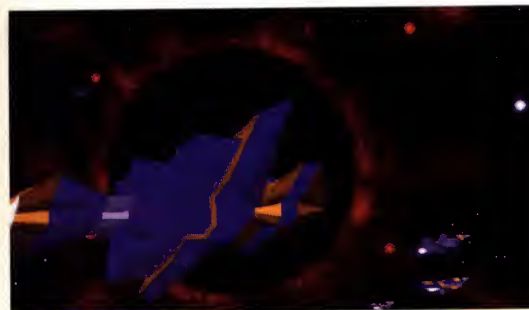
The concept of *Starlord* takes medieval feudalism and transports it into the future. The galaxy is run on feudal lines with a chain allegiance based on alliance and family contacts. It's a political maze through which, in a mixed metaphor kind of way, you have to work your way to the top. You start the game owing allegiance to an Earl, your aim is to fight, buy, cheat and grovel your way through the aristocratic ranks until you reach the dizzy heights of Emperor. As well as your own success you need to look out for members of your family - blood is thicker than water and a lot more use in easing your route up the greasy pole. Nepotism is all.

However you are not alone in setting your sights on the top. There are a thousand other young hopefuls out there with the same ambition. Occasionally you might work together, occasionally tacitly ignore each other but, at the end of the day, there's only going to be one winner. ☞

'Starlord takes medieval feudalism and transports it into the future.'

Ships designed by the man responsible for Brighton's away strip.





'Right then which one of you called me Bald Eagle?' snarled the follicularly challenged gunman.

Mike Singleton: A Eulogy

Having started his computer games life programming a games pack for the ZX-81 (pause while *PC Zone* journalists wipe tears of nostalgia from their eyes), Mike Singleton went on to program classic strategy games like *Lords of Midnight* (lots of men with large pointy helmets hack each other to death over some 'tundra') and *Doomdark's Revenge* (in revenge for being hacked to death in the previous game, more men with helmets carve up some more men – but with larger axes this time). An arcade adventure followed, namely *Dark Sceptre*, and then came the classic *Midwinter* and its sequel *Flames of Freedom* with their distinct high speed vectors and fractal landscapes. *Midwinter*, of course, set the tone for sprawling great political plotlines and huge multi-character management, as well as important arcade shoot 'em-up elements and an overall 'big as life' sort of feel.

Pausing momentarily to allegorise (in *Midwinter* style) the collapse of the Eastern Block in *Ashes of the Empire*, Mike and the Maelstrom team went on to be more innovative, with their true 3D-wear silly glasses and duck-a-lot blast 'em-up, *StarFighter*. (Alas, this much-mooted ground breaker will, because of 'back-stage' wrangling, only now appear in the console market.) Futuristically speaking, a couple of projects are lurking in the Maelstrom in-tray. Firstly, a *Comanche*-style 3D bitmapped landscaped game (looking at least five times faster than *Comanche*) and another title using the very impressive 3D stereoscopic engine.

The PC as GPO

The key aspect of a Play By Mail game is the interaction with a huge number of human opponents. Your progress is, in part, influenced by actions of other characters over whom you have little or no influence. In *Starlord* there are one thousand other lords for you to interrelate with. The simulation of a thousand independently active opponents is one of the challenges in programming *Starlord* and, MicroProse hope, one of the strengths of the game. They have developed a genetic subsystem whereby each of the thousand other *Starlords* will act relatively intelligently and, more importantly, consistently in character. Some *Starlords* might tend to act aggressively others passively, some might like *Coronation Street*, others might be Brookies. These characteristics will be randomly generated (unless you select a preset stardate where all values are constant) so the fact that a character acted one way in one game doesn't mean they'll act in the same way next time you play. To add challenge (and realism) to the whole thing these characteristics aren't going to be telegraphed to you in the manual or at the beginning of the game. You'll have to suss the characters out as you play. As producer Steve Ramsden explains: 'In real life all our genes are different but you can't see the different genes. What matters is that our behaviour is different.'

PC as arcade machine

However the aim is to do more than simply mimic *Starlord* the PBM. *Starlord* on the PC should have a lot more to it. Namely a 3D combat sequence which, based on what we've seen already (and what we've seen from Mike Singleton in the past), should be pretty special. Obviously strategy purists might shy away from such crudely Epicurean delights as hands-on combat and they'll be able to play *Starlord* solely as a strategy game. For the rest of us the battles will provide a welcome rush of adrenalin and a chance to influence the outcome of crucial space battles.

Probably only the arcade junkie will elect to fight every battle though. Steve Ramsden again: 'The way we tend to play is to let the computer calculate the results when the battle looks to be a foregone conclusion and only step in when the result seems to be in the balance.' Is this the spirit of Rorke's Drift, The Battle of Britain and Botham's Ashes?

PC gamer as audience

The people most likely to get excited at first mention of *Starlord* are fans of the original. However MicroProse believes that it should have a much wider appeal than that. There's no shortage of strategy for the traditionalists and there's plenty of 'jumping and shooting around bits' for people who like their software to leap out of the screen at them. Let's face it, space strategy/combat games are not exactly unpopular at the moment. **Z**

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Blueprint

Shadowcaster

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 0753 549442

OUT: September



The 3D views in Shadowcaster have been created using a development of the Wolfenstein 3D engine.



Spellcasting and combat all take place in real time.



Some characters, like the dragon, can hover or fly over enemies.



The designers have been particularly inventive in creating new creatures to tackle. Some of them are quite nightmarish.



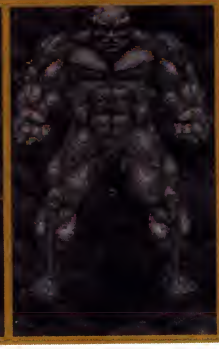
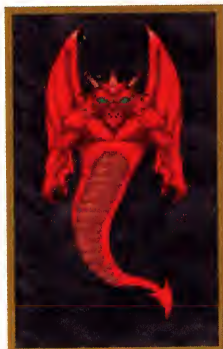
As the human character, you will eventually have a variety of weapons at your disposal with which to deal with enemies. The other characters each have a different natural method of attack.



The amphibious creature is as happy above the water as it is beneath it.



The high level of graphic detail gives the locations in the game a unique and eerie atmosphere.



MORPHOLOGY

A major feature of the game is the ability of the central character to morph from one shape to another. The wolfman and dragon are just two of the possibilities. We can't show you the excellent animation, but you can get an idea of how the process works from these shots.



A variety of effects, like this mist, are used to lend the locations some real atmosphere!



The action you take is controlled using only the mouse cursor. As you move it, it will change shape to indicate its function.



Yes, in this game you can even be attacked by homicidal strawberries. Bizarre!



There's nothing like a bolt from the blue for saving the day when you're down to your last cliché.

Can Origin possibly release a game to top *Ultima Underworld II*?

Mark Burgess has seen Raven Software's action RPG game so he knows that they can.



SHADOWCASTER IS ORIGIN's bid to repeat the huge success of *Ultima Underworld*. The game comes from Raven Software and is towards the action end of the

action/adventure spectrum with no eating, resting or spells and the minimum of text. 'Shadowcaster is radically different from *Underworld*,' says Steve Raffel, one of the programmers. 'It uses an enhanced version of id Software's *Wolfenstein* engine, which gives the game a faster and more action orientated feel than *Underworld*. We wanted to create a world where you could jump in and have fun instead of having to evaluate a lot of factors before every move. Our motto for the game was S.E.F - simple, easy, fun.'

That is why the game has a single character which is able to transform into a giant, a human, a dragon, a frogman, a cloud and a tiger. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses: some can breathe fire, fly over hazards, swim underwater, knock walls down or cast spells. 'While games like *Ultima Underworld* may have some of those capabilities,' says Steve, 'no other single character in any game does.'

Steve and Brian Raffel set up Raven Software in 1990. The two brothers are artists. Their first commercial program was *Black Crypt* for the Amiga. This was heavily influenced by Faster Than Light's classic first person

perspective RPG, *Dungeon Master*. Like the latter game, *Black Crypt* utilised a flip-screen view, but it had moved on significantly from that game in the complexity of its plot and the quality of the animation and artwork. The puzzles were, if anything, even more ingenious than those in Faster Than Light's creation. Although a PC version of *Black Crypt* was planned, it sadly never made it to the market. *Shadowcaster* is the team's first PC game. Is it more difficult programming for the PC?

'One important factor was the extra time required to design graphics that could be easily transferred from graphics programs to the game program without losing too much of their original appearance,' says Steve. 'Unlike the Amiga, we didn't have sprites and blitter to work with. Learning the 3D packages needed to create the illusion of depth in a flat screen, the morphing programs to create a believable transformation from one shape to another and incorporating the movement of monsters in relation to the player also presented challenges, but we feel that *Shadowcaster* has dealt very successfully with all of these factors.'

Shadowcaster was to be *Black Crypt II* with a multi-character party, but the shape shifter gives the gameplay all the power and variety of a multi-character game without having to keep track of so many characters. Because the shapes are added one

at a time, you can explore the powers and limitations of each shape as it is acquired, rather than trying to master several different characters and sets of powers at once.

The real fun in having a single character with a morphing ability is that, not only does each shape have different methods of attacking and defending itself, and different levels of mobility, but each has a unique perspective on the surroundings. The cloud, for example, offers the player a more expansive view of the area it occupies because it is able to float above the level of walls and other obscuring objects. The amphibian creature, on the other hand, is very much at home in the underwater scenes which are unlike anything you will have seen in a first-person RPG. You are suspended in a hazy expanse of green-blue, with lots of weird light patterns and shadows playing around you. All of a sudden, a large, ominous shape will start at you out of the gloom, only to vanish again into the distance almost as suddenly as it came - the effect is very atmospheric.

Wolfenstein engine, no spells, no faffing around with Trevor the woodland elf... this sounds too good to be true. Is this the end for manuals with 80 page appendices full of character attributes? 'There will always be hard-core RPG adventurers that will love the complex spell and combat systems,' says Steve. Seeing my face fall he added: 'We feel there will be more demand for adventure

games that allow for faster action without sacrificing variety in gameplay. Operating systems and applications are moving toward a graphical interface so games and other leisure software will follow suit. Probably even those games which rely heavily on text and spells will have more of the 'point 'n' click' feel to them.'

Of course, there is always the danger that simplifying an RPG's interface will remove some of the freedom the player has in exploring a world at will, but this doesn't seem to be the case with *Shadowcaster*. The depth of the game has certainly not been sacrificed for the sake of simplicity and accessibility so it appears that dedicated RPG players can have their cake and eat it.

If *Shadowcaster* is successful, and it definitely deserves to make it, Raven will embark on a sequel. Once you have mastered the various forms, you do not have to read through spell lists or designate actions for half a dozen characters every time they have an encounter. You have almost instant access to a full range of powers and abilities simply by changing forms. This lets you make quick decisions about how to meet an encounter and then act on those decisions just as quickly. Unlike conventional RPGs, *Shadowcaster* never loses pace and always manages to maintain an absorbing atmosphere with plenty of challenge. It's potentially the best RPG of the year. **Z**

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb

Minimum Processor: 386

Minimum Speed: 33MHz

Installation: Essential

Minimum Hard Disk: 8Mb

Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: BITS & PCs, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ



Mark Burgess talks about Sound Card Problems, Parity Bits and how to take an electric drill to your PC.

Gravis issue

I AM WRITING to ask you for help. I recently got a Gravis Ultrasound sound card. Its sound is totally excellent - as if you have an orchestra in the room - but when I installed the driver software etc, my memory vanished. Sometimes I am told that I don't have enough RAM to continue to run certain things. I have found ways around this but the Ultrasound software still eats my RAM. You will find the information in my AUTOEXEC.BAT file. You are probably wondering why on earth the mouse driver is in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file and the answer is I can't put it in my CONFIG.SYS. I have tried everything. I know it should be under the device driver command but it just won't go. I really have tried everything; I've even looked in the DOS manual (shock horror).

Now, the reason SMARTDrive is like it is, is because I found out that putting all those long command lines in for SMARTDrive was using tons of RAM (well, not tons, but quite a lot) so I put it in as you see it. This doesn't use as much RAM as before, but runs Windows in about 22 seconds. (Is this good, I have a 486DX 33MHZ?) Without this SMARTDrive command Windows runs in about 60 seconds. What I really want to do is free RAM without losing speed; can you help?

Also X-Wing uses main memory and EMS, but it cannot use XMS. This means I have to load up a text editor and convert XMS into EMS in order to get digitised speech and sound. Is there a command I can add to my AUTOEXEC.BAT file which, on boot up, will ask me how much XMS I want to convert to EMS if I need to?

If I try loading up *Stunt Island* from cold boot it normally doesn't work and I get horrible crackling through the speaker. If I leave my PC on for 5-10 minutes *Stunt Island* will load. I have consulted (big word) the manual and it says if you don't have an actual Sound Blaster card but are emulating one (like me) then it might not work correctly. Is there anything I can do to solve this problem?

Last question. Do you know of any other games apart from *Star Control 2* and *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* that support the Gravis Ultrasound, and how long will it be until it is a standard like Sound Blaster and Ad-Lib?

I would be happy if you tried to answer these questions as I have pondered over them for months.

CONFIG.SYS

DEVICE=C:\ULTRASND\ULTRINIT.SYS

```
ULTRASND=220,1,1,11,7=UMB
DEVICE=C:\DOS\SETVER.EXE
DEVICE=C:\WINDOWS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\WINDOWS\EMM386.EXE RAM
DOS=HIGH, UMB
COUNTRY=044,,C:\DOS\COUNTRY.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\DISPLAY.SYS CON=(EGA,,1)
FILES=30
STACKS=9,256
BUFFERS=20
AUTOEXEC.BAT
@ECHO OFF
PROMPT $P$G
PATH C:\ULTRASND; C:\DOS
SET ULTRASND=220,1,1,11,7
C:\ULTRASND\ULTRINIT.EXE
CALL ULTRASND\SBOS.BAT
SET ULTRADIR=C:\ULTRASND
SET BLASTER=A220 17 D1 T1
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
MODE CON CODEPAGE PREPARE=((437)
C:\DOS\EGA.CPI)
MODE CON CODEPAGE SELECT=437
KEYB UK,,C:\DOS\KEYBOARD.SYS
C:\MOUSE
C:\SMARTDRV
```

Paul Cookson, Killingworth, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

What was wrong?!

I am currently running a 386DX laptop with 4Mb of RAM. It has Windows 3.1 installed on it. Unfortunately, it went wrong and I found myself re-installing it. I presumed that it would work perfectly after this. It didn't. When I booted the computer and loaded Windows, it crashed.

To cut a long story short, I traced the root of the problem down to one file: HIMEM.SYS, from the Windows version. I immediately replaced it in the CONFIG.SYS with the \DOS version. It now works perfectly. Obviously I now avoid using \windows\HIMEM.SYS at all times.

Is it a faulty file in my personal copy of Windows or is it something to do with laptop architecture? (For the same reason, it has to run under a special Microsoft/Toshiba DOS 5. Any normal DOS crashes it straight away!) Basically, what is wrong with the HIMEM.SYS that came with Windows.

Alastair Smith, Hornsea, North Humberside.

Many laptops have DOS on ROM, which explains why efforts to load DOS from disk fail. The best thing to do is to re-install the operating system. If you don't have the original disks, get a copy of HIMEM.SYS from someone else and check. Put the old driver in a new directory and re-name it HIMEM.OLD or whatever. Then load up a friend's copy of HIMEM.SYS and type COMP HIMEM.SYS HIMEM.OLD. If there is an error, just use the working version. I reckon that re-installing the software will cure your problem. MB.

I've typed in your files as you sent them to me, but I think there's some mistake in the last two lines of your AUTOEXEC.BAT. They don't make sense. Anyway, one thing I can suggest straightaway is that you put the line DEVICE=C:\WINDOWS\HIMEM.SYS

first, in your CONFIG.SYS file then change DEVICE to DEVICEHIGH in all lines thereafter. Your mouse driver should be installed as:

LOADHIGH C:\MOUSE.COM

in the AUTOEXEC.BAT or

DEVICEHIGH=MOUSE.SYS

in the CONFIG.SYS. This should free up a lot of RAM.

Unfortunately the Gravis has a bit of a reputation for gobbling up memory.

On to SMARTDrive. This program merely creates a disk cache using your computer's extended memory. There is no need to type anything after the SMARTDRV command unless you want to use its special features such as specifying the amount of the cache with the /e (element) switch or the amount of extended memory that programs can reclaim. The default values are:

| Extended Memory | Initial Size | Windows Cache Size |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| ≤ 1Mb | all | no caching |
| ≤ 2Mb | 1Mb | 256k |
| ≤ 4Mb | 1Mb | 512k |
| ≤ 6Mb | 2Mb | 1Mb |
| ≥ 6Mb | 2Mb | 2Mb |

From your printouts, I should think you must have a 4Mb machine.

The installation program of X-Wing takes care of the memory configuration automatically. When you talk about using a text editor, do you mean to alter your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files prior to a reset? It doesn't make sense otherwise. There is no command you can put into the AUTOEXEC.BAT that does as you want. However there are some programs that give you a choice of configuration on boot up (such as Easy Boot). The latest version of DOS (6) also has a good memory manager.

I'm afraid there is not much you can do if your sound card isn't supported by a particular game. You can ask the publishers if they have, or have heard of, a patch that will make it work, but that's about all.

Gravis Ultrasound isn't well supported by software houses and will find it hard to get established (let alone as a standard) until it is. Buzz Aldrin's *Race Into Space* is the only game I can remember reviewing that specifically supported it. There is another problem in that Gravis Ultrasound's Sound Blaster emulation isn't perfect. You have to do a bit of tinkering with SBOS. MB.

Parity matters

IMPRESSED AS I AM with PC Zone, I'd be positively double-clicked if you could shed some light on my technical glitch. (I'm sorry? Ed.) It's one of those occasional things that only affects certain programs. Thus far, nobody on the end of a software helpline, or at the hardware manufacturer's, has been able to do more than waffle. So, in desperation, I'm turning to the massed brainpower at Bits & PCs.

The most recent example of the problem has been with *Syndicate*, which installed perfectly, but will not run beyond a certain stage. When I get to

the 'game loading' screen, what usually happens is that the screen goes completely blank and I have to warm reboot.

However, with some DMA/IRQ settings I get the message 'PARITY ERROR ??? SYSTEM HALTED'. It's the question marks that I find most confusing, as no manual I've read makes any mention of them. They would seem to indicate that the system itself is not entirely sure what happened.

I am running several other games that have similar memory requirements to *Syndicate*, such as *Space Hulk*, *Formula 1 Grand Prix* and *Flashback*. There's no problem with any of them. In fact, the only other occasions I've had this trouble have been with *Comanche: Maximum Overkill* and *The Legacy*, both of which refused to run. So perhaps there's something common to all three games that doesn't like my system?

I have an AMI 486SX-25, Multisync SVGA monitor with a Paradise PVG1D 1Mb card, 4Mb RAM, a 240Mb Quantum HD and Microsoft compatible mouse. I have no sound card or other exotic add-on, unless you count a common-or-garden Quickshot joystick. My operating system is MS DOS 5.

Enclosed are copies of the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files I used on the boot disk for the above mentioned games and a screen grab of my IRQ settings. If you can find out what's going on, you're a better man than anyone employed by the helplines I've dialled.

```
@ECHO OFF
PROMPT $p$g
PATH C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
SET MOUSE=C:\MOUSE
C:\WINDOWS\MOUSE.COM /Y
LOADHIGH KEYB UK,,C:\DOS\KEYBOARD.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DOS=HIGH,UMB
FILES=20
BUFFERS=20
```

Bill McLean, Coundon, Coventry.

Memory chips are notoriously unreliable. It's because of this that every time the memory and its contents are altered, an extra bit (0 or 1) is written along with the data. This is the parity bit. When anything is read from memory, the parity bit is checked. If problems occur, a Non-Maskable Interrupt is generated telling the CPU that something is wrong. The computer might respond with an informative message, or, on the other hand, it might just hang.

Your system is telling you that a memory chip is malfunctioning, but it can't tell you where. It's not in the main memory, otherwise it would occur more often and with all applications.

Your IRQ settings are the same as ours, so if these are the ones that cause problems with *Syndicate*, *Comanche: Maximum Overkill* and *The Legacy* then I would think the guilty party has to be the video board. There must be something strange in the way the three programs you mention use or write to video memory. Get the board checked by the manufacturer/distributor, telling them what you think might be wrong. The only other alternative I can think of is that you have an 8-bit card in a 16-bit slot. This should not make any difference as the unused bits should be set high, but occasionally they can generate spurious signals. **MB.**

Sho fixt it!

I RECENTLY PURCHASED, after much hunting around, *Star Control II* by Accolade. I'd played *Star Control I* on the Sega many moons ago, and I counted it as one of the greatest games ever made! The game on the PC has incredible sound: not the normal beeps and buzzes, but an hour of digitised music – the only problem being that it was extremely quiet.

Being a poor student, I'm not keen to invest £100 plus in a sound card. Anyway, I don't have a worthwhile software base to warrant the expenditure. What I wanted was a simple and cheap way of appreciating the sounds of this game.

You can't pass the PC's internal speaker through my stereo via the phono socket; instead I either drive headphones at a deafening level or drive normal system speakers (without the use of an amp) at a decent level.

When wearing headphones, you're deafened by the Shofixti cry of 'Ar-oooow!!!' as he self-destructs on a Kamikaze mission, and by the sudden shock of your own ship being blown to pieces unexpectedly. To be honest, it scares the crap out of me and makes the game that much more exciting!

If you're even slightly adept with a soldering iron then, for a few pence, better quality sound is available from your PC. From what I can make out by discussing this with People Who Know, it poses no problems to speakers or computer.

Tools

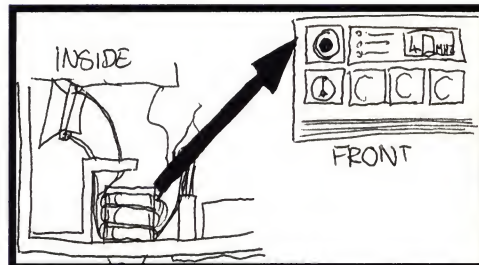
The only tools you'll need are:

1. A drill with a 10mm bit – which is the outside diameter of the...
2. Switching stereo headphone jack – only 6mm sizes are available, so if you want to use Walkman-style headphones, you'll need another adaptor, which will cost a couple of pounds.
3. Approximately 20cm of wire – similar to that found inside your machine (or enough to reach from your internal speaker to where you will place the jack on the panel of the machine).
4. Wire cutters – although, being a true cheapskate, I just used a pair of scissors.
5. Some solder and a soldering iron.

Drilling

Find a suitable place on the front of your machine to place the jack. Make sure that the jack will fit inside the machine once installed and that it won't obstruct any inner workings.

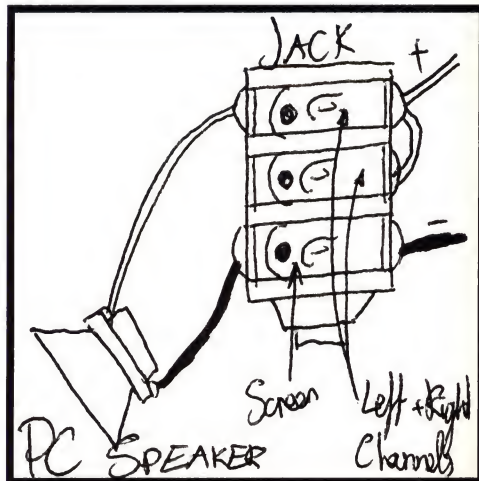
Here's how I positioned mine:



Once a position is found, make a small pit where you want the exact centre of the jack to go, to avoid the drill slipping. Carefully drill a hole through the plastic casing. Once through, clean up the swarf around the hole and prepare for the wiring.

Wiring

Unsolder the wires from the internal PC speaker. Cut some wire to reach from the speaker to where you want the jack to be on the face of the machine.



Strip a few millimetres off the ends of these wires and tin them with solder. When wiring in position, follow the diagram here.

Fitting

Simply push the jack through the drilled hole and fasten with the nut on the other side. When the jack is not in use, the PC speaker is operative; when a plug is inserted, the internal speaker is by-passed and the external speakers work.

The total cost of this operation is under £1.00. In comparison to spending hundreds on a soundcard, this is adequate for my needs and, I expect, many other peoples'. It's also safe, allowing better and, often, more ambient sound reproduction.

If a volume control were needed, a variable resistor (potentiometer) could be added in series, preferably outside the machine as there may not be room on its face. I'm not sure of the resistance value to be specified, but around 10Ω may be about right. You could test this yourself.

I hope my inventiveness will be of use to someone and I'll tell you if my computer blows up because of my modifications – which I doubt.

Dave Stewart, Corsham, Wiltshire

Well, thanks for all of that. I'd only add that the case should be off the machine while you work, and remind everyone that it will invalidate their warranty. **MB.**

Self-effacing erratum

When reading the review on *Syndicate* in this month's *PC Zone*, I thought, 'Wow what a wicked game – and it even supports Ad-Lib.' So I went out and bought it – but alas no sound. This is supposed to be one of the best features, so how do I get it?

Phil Hey, Kirkby, Cumbria

This is a cock-up by the reviewer, Andy Butcher. *Soz. Syndicate only supports Sound Blaster. Andy has since fallen on his Sword Of Great Damage. MB.*

TROUBLESHOOTER

FEATURING THE HACKMASTERS™ AND THE TRUEPLAYERS™

In the chewed-up, rubble-strewn, still-smoking holocaust that is the PC gamesplaying world, two sets of rogues scavenge the landscape. Firstly scuttle the TruePlayers™, picking through the litter, searching for RPGs, strategy games, flight sims and small pieces of cheese. When they find them, they play them – to death. They will never cheat. The HackMasters™ are their opponents in this wasteland. A hacking, cracking, cheating fraternity, dedicating their time to destroying the very games the TruePlayers™ play on Sunday afternoons. Troubleshooter mediates over this conflict (with a vaguely puzzled frown).



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No other magazine can offer this kind of free service. Complete solutions, maps, cheats, hacks and all sorts of gamesplaying tips for all the latest games will be on offer – from a real person, not an answerphone. Just ring and hear us sing.

The HackMasters™

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for hardware or software damage incurred from using the HackMaster™ hacks and cracks. As long as you follow the instructions carefully, it is impossible to destroy your games or computer with these hacks.



THE HACKMASTERS™ ROLE in life is two-fold. Firstly, they break into games (mainly RPGs), change values (mainly RPG stats) and then exhibit them for you (RPG players). Secondly, they hate the TruePlayers™ and their biscuit-eating ways and will do anything to get on their holier-than-God nerves (mainly by the first role). So, you see, the HackMasters™ with their Syndicate, Betrayal At Krondor, and Worlds of Legend hacks, lead a vast and varied life, even if it is a sort of ever-decreasing-circle type shape.

Backup

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files. It is then sensible, if not prudent, to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make a bad mistake restore the files thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV
```

Simple as pimples. But remember the bottom line – don't ring us unless it's an emergency.

Hexadecimal

We count up in base 10. The PCs count up in base 16. Like this: 01, 02, 03, all the way up to 09 and then 0A (for 10), 0B (for 11), up to 0E (14) and 0F (15) and then 10, which, in decimal, is the number 16. If this sounds complicated then it's because it is. But for the HackMaster's™ experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (and remember all hex numbers on this page will be suffixed with an 'H' e.g. FFFFH).

| HEX | DECIMAL | HEX | DECIMAL |
|-----|---------|-----|---------|
| 0AH | 10 | 40H | 64 |
| 0FH | 15 | 63H | 99 |
| 10H | 16 | 64H | 100 |
| 20H | 32 | C8H | 200 |
| 28H | 40 | FAH | 250 |
| 32H | 50 | FFH | 255 |

Debug

Somewhere in the depths of uncharted territory (i.e. your DOS folder) is an extremely useful program called *debug*. It allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data. It is the program we will use most in the HackMaster Zone™ and, since it is the most user unfriendly program on this planet, I think that a brief introduction/explanation may be in order. Here's a step by step guide to a *debug* hack:

To run it just type *DEBUG* in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a 'file not found' style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS DOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us.

```
1>NSAVE01.GAM<return>
```

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above, the 'N' command. This tells *debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the 'N' and the full filename.

```
2>L<return>
```

This command actually loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the awaiting hands of the hacker.

```
3>E 01 ED v<return>
```

This is the Edit function. Type it as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the E and the address (01F) and the 'FF' (255 in decimal).

```
4>E 01E3 FF FF
```

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address and *debug* will repeat your command. Then simply type in the values which follow (90, 90 etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN. So basically the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type in red):

```
>E 01E3 <RETURN>  
21FB:01F3 34.FF <space> 34.FF <return>  
>
```

```
5>W<return>
```

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying: 'writing xxxxx bytes' will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing has been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. So if you've made a mistake earlier just quit *debug* and start the process again.

```
6>Q<return>
```

This quits you back to DOS.

FLASHBACK

(Dolphine)

Say 'thank you' to Nikolaos Papadakos and Chris Williams for their rather splendid exposition of the 'Prince of Pluto' level codes. They'll receive a game each for their toils.

| | EASY | NORMAL | HARD |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| LEVEL 1 | JAGUAR | BANTHA | TOHOLD |
| LEVEL 2 | COMBEL | SHIVA | PICOLO |
| LEVEL 3 | ANTIC | KASYK | FUGU |
| LEVEL 4 | NOLAN | SARLAC | CAPSUL |
| LEVEL 5 | ARTHUR | MAENOC | ZZZAP |
| LEVEL 6 | SHIRYU | SULUST | MANIAC |
| LEVEL 7 | RENDER | NEPTUN | NO WAY |
| END | BELUGA | BELUGA | BELUGA |

THE INCREDIBLE MACHINE PART II

(Sierra)

Peter Lai reckons that *The Incredible Machine* add-on disk is 'one of the most addictive games he has ever played'. The HackMasters™ pause. Surely, they think, if you hacked the game into small *debug*-sized pieces this would cure your fatal addiction. Alternatively, of course, we could reveal the list of level codes you sent in and stop other people from contracting this hideous affliction.

| LEVEL | PASSWORD | LEVEL | PASSWORD |
|-------|--------------|-------|----------|
| 88 | olive | 124 | emulsion |
| 89 | polynomials | 125 | input |
| 90 | parametric | 126 | paradise |
| 91 | solar system | 127 | samurai |
| 92 | marble | 128 | chaos |
| 93 | heavy | 129 | brawl |
| 94 | republic | 130 | aside |
| 95 | quatrain | 131 | axis |
| 96 | tyrannosaur | 132 | offbeat |
| 97 | sulfuric | 133 | quip |
| 98 | dopa | 134 | newman |
| 99 | minaret | 135 | slope |
| 100 | dovetail | 136 | tenon |
| 101 | jasmine | 137 | crosscut |
| 102 | wrangle | 138 | norm |
| 103 | kudos | 139 | house |
| 104 | culdesac | 140 | macaroni |
| 105 | yodel | 141 | talon |
| 106 | xylophone | 142 | beak |
| 107 | monkey | 143 | biretta |
| 108 | heist | 144 | frequent |
| 109 | capture | 145 | stream |
| 110 | purse | 146 | umiak |
| 111 | hobby | 147 | hiatus |
| 112 | deify | 148 | creek |
| 113 | merganser | 149 | croquet |
| 114 | seal | 150 | acid |
| 115 | contraption | 151 | baby |
| 116 | flax | 152 | sean |
| 117 | primordial | 153 | qualm |
| 118 | rave | 154 | thiamine |
| 119 | hyacinth | 155 | turn |
| 120 | spider | 156 | kangaroo |
| 121 | yammer | 157 | content |
| 122 | nerve | 158 | belloc |
| 123 | grate | 159 | password |

SYNDICATE
(Electronic Arts)

Built in cheats – eh? The HackMasters™ love them. Especially when they're built in to the code of psuedo role-playing games such as *Syndicate*. Bullfrog may have given their characters 'modern-day' stats such as Observation and Adrenalin but we, the HackMasters™, know their game. It's an RPG whichever way you look at it. So go ahead without compunction and change your company name to NUK THEM (with spaces to resurrect all your dead team members), WATCH THE CLOCK (to speed up the clock), ROB A BANK (top up your money to a cool \$100 million), and COOPER TEAM to give you a ninjascope squad resplendent in advanced limbs and all sorts of outlandish weaponry. There are two other codes sitting smugly in the .EXE file which even King HackMaster™ McHackMaster couldn't work out: TO THE TOP and DO IT AGAIN. Try them and write in if you find out.

WORLDS OF LEGEND
(Mindscape)

Explore the *Worlds of Legend* with careless abandon with this stat-revitalising hackette. N.B. This hack will also work with the original *Legend* game. Save your game in slot zero and then backup the file EMPIRE00.SAV. Then *debug*:

```

>NEMPIRE00.SAV
>L
>E 0126 FF 00 FF 255 HPS char 1
>E 01A6 FF 00 FF 255 HPS char 2
>E 0226 FF 00 FF 255 HPS char 3
>E 02A6 FF 00 FF 255 HPS char 4
>E 0116 63 STR char 1
>E 0196 63 STR char 2
>E 0216 63 STR char 3
>E 02A6 63 STR char 4
>W
>Q

```

Flashback : a cross between Total Recall and Back to the Future – or at least it was until the HackMasters™ got their little hexadecimal fingers on it.



pecial thanks to The Tottenham Court Road Computer Exchange (143 Whitfield St, London W1, tel 071 388 2613) for the loan of the games to HackMasters™ this month.

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Send, send, send is what we say. £50.00, £50.00, £50.00 is what we pay (for complete spoils). Make any solutions as brief as possible, and any hacks or cheats clearly explained and preferably in *debug* format. Send to David McCandless at this address:

Spoiled!
Troubleshooter
PC Zone
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR

(Sierra/Dynamix)

We bet Raymond E. Feist didn't expect this when he was constructing the 'plot' for his *RiftWar* game. Picture the scene: Thorgandia (son of Thorgandian), in combat with five assassins, has received a mortal blow. His hit points drain away, 4... 3... 2... (enter HackMasters)... 255! Thorgandia steps up with his new 99 strength rating and smashes the nearest assassin for... 1000 damage. Excellent. So just take that Feisty!

Here's how to do it. Save the game in slot one, exit the game and then back up the file

SAVE01.GAM. Using *debug*:

>NSAVE01.GAM

>L

>E 01E3 FF FF Max health char 1

>E 02A1 FF FF Max health char 2

>E 0242 FF FF Max health char 3

>E 01E8 FF FF Max stamina char 1

>E 02A6 FF FF Max stamina char 2

>E 0243 FF FF Max stamina char 3

>E 01ED 63 Speed char 1

>E 02AB 63 Speed char 2

>E 024C 63 Speed char 3

>E 01F2 63 Strength char 1

>E 02B0 63 Strength char 2

>E 0251 63 Strength char 3

>W

>Q

To plump up the individual skills, use this table to look up the address and put 63 in each address:

| SKILL | CHAR 1 | CHAR 2 | CHAR 3 |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Defence | 01F7 | 02B5 | 0256 |
| Crossbow | 01FC | 02BA | 025B |
| Melee | 0201 | 02BF | 0260 |
| Casting | 0206 | 02C4 | 0265 |
| Assessment | 020B | 02C9 | 026A |
| Armour | 0210 | 02CE | 026F |
| Weapon | 0215 | 02D3 | 0274 |

Bite off your yellow fingernails and cheat to complete *Betrayal At Krondor*.



| SKILL | CHAR 1 | CHAR 2 | CHAR 3 |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Barding | 021A | 02D8 | 0279 |
| Haggling | 021F | 02DD | 027E |
| Lockpicking | 0224 | 02E2 | 0283 |
| Scouting | 0229 | 02E7 | 0288 |
| Stealth | 022E | 02EC | 028D |

So, for example, if you want to give char 1 a boost in the old lockpicking department and char 2 a shot of crossbow ability then do the following with *debug*:

>NSAVE01.GAM

>L

>E 0224 63 Lockpick char 1

>E 02BA 63 Crossbow char 2

>W

>Q

ZOOLO

(Gremlin)

The HackMasters™ apologise for the 'lateness' of this hack. We were ready, able and willing to print this hack, months, nay years ago, but unfortunately we lacked a boxed copy to test it on.

With your copy of Xtree Gold or PC Tools, find:

FE 0E C4 8C

in the file ZOOLO.DAT and change it to:

90 90 90 90

for infinite lives.

ROBOCOD

(Millenium)

This may or may not work. This may or may not be useful. This may or may not tickle your cheat buds.

During the game, type LITTLE MERMAID (with a space in-between). From now on, pressing L and then the cursor keys will allow you to teleport to any level. The HackMasters™ tried this on their beta-version, but it may not be incorporated in the release version. You have been warned.



SPACE HULK

MORE!

(Electronic Arts)

'Dear Emperor HackMaster™, it has come to my attention that

certain of our less capable TruePlaying™ brethren have been struggling with the DeathWing campaign aboard the Space Hulk. Their failure brings dishonour to our chapter. In order to rectify this disdainful situation, I, Jim Devious, Imperial HackMaster™ of Not™Tingh Am, and my blood brother, Tim Ponting, have invoked the HackMaster's™ *debug* solution.'

Change into the DAT_DIR sub-directory and backup the file SQUAD.INF. Now *debug*:

>NSQUAD.INF

>L

>E 0194 0B Resurrect sergeants

>E 0154 v v=current mission number

>E 0150 v v=current training mission

>E 0102 07

>E 0108 07

>E 010E 07

>E 0114 07

>E 011A 07

>E 0120 x weapons squad 1 (see below)

>E 0122 x weapons squad 2

>E 0124 x weapons squad 3

>E 0126 x weapons squad 4

>E 0128 x weapons squad 5

>W

>Q

The 'x' values for weapons work as follows:

| | |
|----------------|----|
| SB | 02 |
| FLAMER | 01 |
| TH SH | 10 |
| LC LC | 08 |
| PS | 40 |
| CF | 20 |
| POWER GLOVE | 80 |
| ASSAULT CANNON | 04 |

You can combine weapons by 'adding' certain weapons together, i.e. 42 will give you a PS and an SB, 28 a CF and a lightning claw etc. It is a 'super' hack and therefore it is the Emperor's will to award Sgt Jim Devious the rank of Imperial HackMaster™ and give him 50 earth pounds. Tim Ponting, however (as he signs the cheques) will be accorded the rank of HackMaster™ Infanta. May the Lord bless him and all who sail in him.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You'll have to have a specky chromosome in your genes (or else borrow one) to achieve maximum satisfaction from the HackMaster's™ experience. If you are not very brave or are having teething troubles then the bottom line is: 'Do not ring us' unless it is an emergency or it's the TruePlayer™ Tips Help Line day.

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WINNER!DAY OF THE
TENTACLE

SPOTTED!

A million (small exaggeration) complete spoils for *Day of the Tentacle* packed the Troubleshooter pigeon hole this month (actually it's more of a 'wren hole' these days). While the HackMaster™ scum gnashed their teeth in angst over the unhackableness of *Day of the Tentacle*, we chose the first entry, from one **Michael A. Mullen** of Milton Keynes, as our £50.00 prize-winner. Michael's solution goes through puzzle by puzzle rather than spoiling the game with a beginning-to-end linear walk through.

(Top right) The rapidly mutating Purple Tentacle sprouts bushy eyebrows and small vestigial arms. He now has all the necessary tackle to host *You've Been Framed*. (Below) See what I mean?



Freeing Laverne



HAVE HOAGIE USE the red paint of the kumquat tree by the outhouse. Now go and challenge Washington to chop the tree down. Of course, in the future, the tree timbers! This frees Laverne but simultaneously leaves her to be captured by the tentacles. Now get Laverne to tell the guard she's sick and once the doctor departs take the tentacle chart from the wall and go back to the kennel. Make Laverne need the toilet and let the guard lead her outside. Go to the chron-o-jon. Switch to Bernard and have him go to the roof and get the flag crank and then flush it to Laverne. Switch to Laverne and flush the chart to Hoagie, and then direct her back to the kennel. Switch to Hoagie and have him go upstairs and put the chart on the pile of patterns in the Betsy Ross room. Now get Laverne sent back to the doctor. Sneak out and climb up the chimney, use the crank on the crank case, lower the flag, pick it up, and use it. She can now move about freely.

(Right) Hoagie paints the town red.
(Below) Laverne takes part in a 'visual gag'.

Making the super battery

THE OIL IS ON TOP of a cupboard in the colonial kitchen. The vinegar is a little trickier. Go to Franklin's room and pick up the bottle of wine. Go downstairs and give the bottle to Jefferson. Flush the can opener to Laverne and then switch to her. Send her to the colonial museum room and have her use the opener on the time capsule. Pick up the now vinegared wine from within and flush it to Hoagie. Have Hoagie go outside and get the letter from the mailbox. Flush it to Bernard. Have Bernard go to the suicidal designer's room. Give him the letter and pick up the flag gun in return. Go to the convention room and swap the flag gun for the lighter gun. Talk to the salesman and obtain an exploding cigar. Now open the grate in the corner and drive the



chattering teeth into the grate. Close it quickly and pick up the subdued teeth. Now, grab the 'Help Wanted' sign from the window by the front desk. Flush the sign, lighter, cigar, and teeth to Hoagie. Get Hoagie to give Washie the cigar and then the chattering teeth. Pick up the blanket Hancock discarded and go up to the roof. Use the blanket on the chimney. Now go downstairs and grab the gold quill pen. Take the oil, vinegar and pen to Red, then pick up the battery, give the sign to Red, and collect the lab coat.

Go to the washroom. Pick up the bucket and the brush from the cupboard. Fill the bucket from the pump. Go upstairs to Washington's room and use the bed. Pull the bell cord and wait for the maid to appear. Leave the room and take the soap from the trolley. Use the soap with the bucket of water, go outside and wash the carriage. Follow Franklin to his room and give him the lab coat. Now exit to the exterior and help Franklin with his experiment. Put the battery in the pocket in the kite and push the kite. Now retrieve the fully charged battery.



Getting a diamond

START BY TALKING TO Dr Fred about buying a diamond. Head for the kitchen and get both jugs of coffee. Go to the laundry and grab the funnel from the cabinet. Go back to Dr Fred and use the decaffeinated coffee on Fred's mug. Go upstairs to the Green Tentacle's room and take the videotape, then go to Nurse Edna's room. Switch to Hoagie. Direct him to the basement, pick up the left handed hammer and then head upstairs to the sculpture room. Switch the hammers and then switch back to Bernie. Push nurse Edna and put the tape in the VCR. Now use the VCR. Record the somnambulistic Doc Fred opening the safe. Use the SP/EP switch and play the tape back. Go to the office, open the safe and get the contract.

Climb up the fireplace and enter the open window. Pick up the rope and go back out of the window. Use the rope on the pulley and climb down the chimney. Head outside to dead cousin

Ted and have Hoagie flush the red paint to Bernard. Use the paint on Ted and then use the rope on him. Go back to the roof and pull on the rope. Go through the window and exchange Ted for Fred. Attach the rope to Dr Fred, exit via the window and pull the rope. In the lab use the funnel on Dr Fred and use the regular coffee with the funnel. Give the contract to Dr Fred. When he won't sign tell him you'll beat the Purple Tentacle alone, and then get him to sign your petition.

Go upstairs to Dwayne's room and get the disappearing ink. Go to Ed's room and use the ink on the stamp album. Pick up the pony express stamp and use it on the contract. Return the album to Ed. Flush the contract to Hoagie and have him put it in the mail box. Switch to Bernard. Go to any TV and turn it on. Then go to the office, pick up the bankbook, use the phone and the diamond will soon appear on your doorstep (well, Dr Fred's doorstep anyway).

Winning the human contest

HAVE LAVERNE TALK TO the blue tentacle (once she is wearing her cunning disguise). Enter the contest. Flush the scalpel to Bernard and switch to the past. Pop Oozo the clown with the scalpel and pick up the box o' laffs. Then go into the kitchen and get the fork. Go to Green Tentacle's room and push the right hand speaker and then turn on the stereo. Go downstairs and collect the fake barf. Flush the barf, the box o' laffs, and the fork to Laverne. Flush the textbook to the past and then switch to Hoagie. Go to the colonial kitchen and get the spaghetti. Go upstairs and read the book to the horse, pick up the dentures, flush the pasta and the teeth to Laverne. Switch to Laverne. Go to the room with cousin Ted, pick up the roller-skates and use them on cousin Ted. Use the name tag on Ted and then push him.

Go to the contest area and use the fake barf with Harold. Use the wet noodles on the mummy's head and then use the fork on the noodles. Use the box o' laffs and the dentures on the mummy. Now go talk to the judges and win the contest.

Getting Laverne into
the basement

AFTER THE TRIUMPHANT contest have Laverne go outside to the fence. Have Bernard flush the booboo-be-gone from the office desk to Laverne. Use the booboo-be-gone on the fence and follow the cat. Switch to Hoagie and have him go upstairs to the cat attic room. Swap the mattresses on the two beds, use the bed at the far end, pick up the mouse, and flush it to Laverne. Switch to the future and use the mouse with the cat. Go to the kennel and give the Club Tentacle certificate to the guard. Throw the switch on the wall. Use the cat with the prisoners and you can now get to the lock and into the basement.

Powering up Laverne's
chron-o-jon

SWITCH TO BERNIE. Go to the front desk and take the flier from the rack, flush the flier to Hoagie. Go upstairs to the room with the sleeping guest, go in and close the door. Pick up the keys and go out to the parking lot. Give the keys to the masked man and go back to front desk. Use the crowbar on the gum, and use the gym. Pick up the dime from the payphone and go back to the sleeping guest's room. Put the dimes in the fickle finger's machine and take the sweater. Use the crowbar on the candy machine and pick up the quarters. Go to Ed's room and take the hamster. Go to the ice machine and put the hamster inside. Go down to the laundry room and put the sweater in the dryer. Use the quarters with the dryer and switch to Laverne. Go to cousin Ted's room and get the extension cable. Take the hamster from the ice machine and thaw him out in the microwave in the kitchen.

Go to the laundry room, open the dryer, take the sweater and put it on the hamster. Go outside and use the extension with the chron-o-jon's power lead. Feed the extension through the open window. Go to the basement, plug in the extension and use the hamster with the generator. When you get punched out, switch to Hoagie. Have Hoagie put the flier in the suggestion box and switch back to Laverne. Use the vacuum on the mousehole and retrieve the hamster from the vac. Use the hamster with the generator again and Laverne will be ready to head home.

The grand finale



AFTER BEING FUSED together, go upstairs. When Purple zaps you, go into Dwayne's room and go through the mousehole to the Green Tentacle's room. When you return to normal size, pick up the bowling ball and go down to the basement. Use the bowling ball on the guards and throw the sludge-o-matic switch. When Purple Tentacle confronts you, talk him into zapping Dr Fred. Sit back and watch the end sequence.

SHADOW OF THE COMET



Hurrah! 'Tis the end of the solution of the H.P 'White Supremacy' Lovecraft game, namely the rather gothic, rather strange *Shadow of the Comet*. Those of you who have 'tuned in' to the rather esoteric plot turns and strange Hkbb'll Kaka Klach Nagar 'magic language' bits may be pleased to note that resident Lovecrafter Laurence Scottford has at last finished the game. Take it away Lorenzo (or KaGagoth Magur McKargnog as you're known down at the laundrette).

Part Three

DAY THREE



YOU BEGIN the final day in your lodgings at Dr Cobble's house, having once again been saved by him. The conversation you have shows him to be suspicious of your activities in the night, but if you answer: 'What about if I told you I was acting in the interest of the whole community...' he will accept this. Before he departs, Dr Cobble will give you a warning about Sergeant Baggs and a note from Miss Guildchrist.

Understanding Underhouse



THE NOTE is to summon you to Underhouse's rooms, so you should go there at once. Walk to the post office counter and talk to Miss Guildchrist. After she has finished speaking, Sergeant Baggs will arrive. When he asks you for an explanation, just say 'I'm yours...'. You will both go to Underhouse's apartment where Baggs will ask you where you were the night before. Say: 'Well...' and Underhouse will provide you with an alibi which will temporarily satisfy Baggs. After Baggs has gone, Underhouse will instruct you what to do next and give you a feather.



Sadly, the first official pensioners bungee jump goes drastically wrong.



Mr Blackbird on my shoulder... Zippedeodoodah, Zippedeay, my oh my... Do I have to do this?



Well Fred, if this little stunt doesn't get us onto The Paul Daniels Show, then nothing will.



Uncle Jimmy! What a surprise. I er... didn't expect to meet you hanging round the docks at night!

The fate of Curtis Hambleton



YOUR NEXT TASK is to visit Curtis Hambleton's hut to find the sacred bow and arrow. When you arrive, Thomas Bishop is already there. Talk to him and he will tell you that the door is locked and that he is going to look for Curtis at Greenwood's house.

When he has gone, pick up the stick that is lying on the ground. Use this to dislodge the bar on the other side of the door. Break the pin off the brooch you bought earlier and use this to pick the padlock on the door.

Inside you will discover that Curtis has been murdered. Search the floorboards on the left side of the room and you will find the arrow. Now look in the fireplace where you will find the bow.

An old Indian of the friendlier kind



YOUR NEXT TASK is to find the Indian Natawanga. Go to the forest and find the area with a large tree stump (the area in which you found the creeper earlier). Place the feather on the tree stump and a black bird will arrive. You will magically transform into a white bird and the black bird will lead you to Natawanga's cabin.

To test you, Natawanga will ask you a series of questions. The answers are: The Mic Macs, Yog Sogoth, 1834, A Star, and Dagon. Natawanga will now tell you what you must do and give you a can of magic paint and a ring. Then you will be turned back into a bird and flown back to the forest where you will resume your normal form.

Neutralising Nerackamous



THE NEXT TASK is to find the hideout of Nerackamous. Leave the forest and go to the well. Look down the well and you will climb down it.

Walk to the left and stop just before the path gets lower. Here, throw the magic paint into the water to calm it.

Continue walking to the left and collect the empty can of acid and also the can of tar that are in the next cavern, but leave the can of nitro-glycerine well alone.

Go left into the next chamber and pick up the flints that are lying on the ground. Now carefully go to the south side of the naphtha pit in the centre of the cavern, making sure you don't fall in, and fill the empty can with naphtha.

Go south into the final cavern, where you will eventually encounter Nerackamous. Pour the naphtha in front of him and light it with the flints. Then shoot Nerackamous with the sacred bow and arrow.

After Nerackamous has been killed, a vision of Boleskine will appear and tell you what to do next. Wait till he vanishes then pick up the turquoise, the aquamarine and the butterfly by the throne.

Go back to the chamber to the north and fill the empty can with naphtha once again, then leave the well by the way you came. It is now night.

A boat, a boat, my kingdom for a boat



NOW YOU MUST find a way to reach the island. Go to the harbour, where you will find Thomas Bishop. You need to persuade him to lend you his boat. The correct sequence of responses to achieve this is: 'I was hoping I'd run into you...', 'Have you ever visited...', 'Do not be blinded...', 'No. They are stronger...'.

He will finally agree to lend you his rowing boat. Get into it and row to the island.

The first of many puzzles



ON THE ISLAND you must first remove the emerald and ruby eyes from the statue head lying on the beach. Now look at the door to see a puzzle. You must rearrange the tiles into the picture of a skull with the four red dots at the corners. The principle is similar to a Rubik's Cube and a little practice will show you how to achieve a solution.



Blast it! Why can't I just prise it apart with a screwdriver and put it back in the right order?



Spectacular though it was, the recent Jean Michel Jarre concert had a poor turnout.



Christ mum, how much Baby Bio did you feed to that geranium?



There was something about the last mushroom, that made Alfred decide he'd eaten far too many.

Defeating Dagon



ONCE YOU HAVE solved the puzzle, a door will open in the rock. Go through it into a chamber with a bizarre rock formation. Climb up the rock and place the ruby in the left eye (right as you are looking at it). This will cause a beam to appear and bounce off two gems set in the cavern walls.

Now stand on the star in the floor that is directly south of the centre of the rock and use the turquoise to complete the beam, making it into a star. Dagon will appear from the rock, but he will be driven back by the beam and you will run from the chamber just before it explodes, trapping Dagon. On the beach, the vision of Boleskine will appear to you once again. He will tell you what to do next and give you his ring.

See no evil



NOW YOU MUST climb back into the boat and let the currents take you to a cavern. Before you enter it, you must be holding the lantern because it is pitch black inside.

There are creatures inside the cavern but they are blind, so as long as you stay out of their way, you will be safe. Shortly after you enter the cavern,

the lantern will run out of fuel, so fill it with naphtha from the can.

Walk to the left until you come into a chamber full of white ape-like creatures. Search the north wall here until you find an exit and go through it. The chamber beyond is lit. It contains a shrine to Cthulu. Walter Webster and his mother are tied up here and their energy is being slowly drained.

Before you do anything else, put the emerald in Boleskine's ring and the turquoise in Natawanga's ring. Go to the middle of the room where there is a slab of ice covering something. Use the can of acid to melt the ice. Underneath is a diamond you need.

Take it and Cthulu will appear and begin killing the Websters. Put the rings on and visions of Boleskine and Natawanga will appear and temporarily transform you into a golem with the strength to free the Websters and prevent Cthulu from fully materialising.

The Websters will thank you and leave. Boleskine's vision will appear to you and give you further instructions. Make your way out of the cavern. There are no creatures to hinder your progress now, but the original entrance is blocked. Look near the wall just north of the original entrance and you will find a small passageway. This will lead you directly to the stone circle.

The final conflict



SET UP THE TRIPOD on the south side of the circle and place the camera and lens upon it. Attach the magnifying glass to make a telescopic lens. Take a look at the butterfly and place it in the camera. Now attach the lantern to the rear of the camera to throw four coloured beams of light onto the rocks.

Take the wrapping from the unexposed plates and take a picture as the comet passes overhead. As you take the picture a fragment of comet falls from overhead. Take it and Yog Soggoth will appear.

Use the flints on the upper-left rock (red). Use the aquamarine on the lower-left rock (blue). Use the fragment of comet on the lower-right rock (white). Use the diamond on the upper-right rock (green). Yog Soggoth will disappear.

Finally the vision of Boleskine will appear to congratulate you on preventing the ancient ones from returning to Earth. The scene cuts to the following morning and all that remains is to pack and make your way back to the harbour where the villagers are waiting to say their good-byes...

The end

(OR IS IT?)

SOUND GALAXY

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|--|---------|---------|
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| ADLIB | • | • |
| SOUND BLASTER VERSION 2 | • | • |
| COVEX SPEECH THING | • | • |
| DISNEY SOUND SOURCES | • | • |
| FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL2 | • | • |
| FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL3 | • | • |
| MANUAL VOLUME CONTROL | • | • |
| DIGITAL SOFTWARE VOLUME CONTROL | • | • |
| DIGITAL BASS & TREBLE CONTROL | • | • |
| SAMPLING RATE, RECORDING UP TO: | 23KHz | 15KHz |
| SAMPLING RATE, PLAYBACK UP TO: | 44.1KHz | 44.1KHz |
| GAME PORT, WITH MIDI OPTION | • | • |
| DYNAMIC FILTERING FOR BETTER SOUND | • | • |
| CD AUDIO IN | • | • |
| CAN USE MICROPHONE AND CD DURING DIGITAL PLAYBACK | • | • |
| SMT BOARD FOR BETTER RELIABILITY | • | • |
| FREE SPEAKERS | • | • |
| CD-ROM INTERFACE (AT-BUS) | • | • |
| PANASONIC INTERFACE | • | • |
| MIYASU INTERFACE | • | • |
| SONY INTERFACE | • | • |
| CD-ROM INTERFACE (SCSI) | • | • |
| MICROPHONE AGC AMPLIFIER | • | • |
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| SOFTWARE SELECTABLE I/O, DMA & ADDRESS SETTING CONFIGURATION | • | • |
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| BUILT-IN AMPLIFIER | • | • |
| STEREO LINES IN AND OUT | • | • |

| 16-bit COMPARISON | STEREO |
|--|---------|
| NO OF SOUND STANDARDS | 6 |
| ADLIB | • |
| SOUND BLASTER VERSION 2 | • |
| SOUND BLASTER PRO II | • |
| MICROSOFT WINDOWS SOUND SYSTEM | • |
| COVEX SPEECH THING | • |
| DISNEY SOUND SOURCES | • |
| FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL2 | • |
| FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL3 | • |
| DIGITAL SOFTWARE VOLUME CONTROL | • |
| DIGITAL BASS & TREBLE CONTROL | • |
| CD QUALITY SAMPLING RATE, RECORD & PLAYBACK UP TO: | 44.1KHz |
| GAME PORT, WITH MIDI OPTION | • |
| DYNAMIC FILTERING FOR BETTER SOUND | • |
| CD AUDIO IN | • |
| CAN USE MICROPHONE AND CD DURING DIGITAL PLAYBACK | • |
| CD-ROM INTERFACE (AT-BUS) | • |
| PANASONIC INTERFACE | • |
| MIYASU INTERFACE | • |
| SONY INTERFACE | • |
| CD-ROM INTERFACE (SCSI) | • |
| MICROPHONE AGC AMPLIFIER | • |
| STEREO MICROPHONE INPUT | • |
| SOFTWARE SELECTABLE I/O, DMA & ADDRESS SETTING CONFIGURATION | • |
| RETAINED WHEN POWER OFF | • |
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| STEREO LINES IN AND OUT | • |

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Whether you want the world to know your views on software prices or you simply fancy winning a smart piece of

software as Letter of the Month, these are the pages for you. We have more letters than a second hand scrabble set.

Greetings from Nundah (maybe)

I WAS GOING to write a letter that commended your magazine for reviewing mainly adventures (and 'thinking games'); I was also going to write about the wittiness of the reviews. But then I thought: 'Why should I?' So I won't.

Matthew Wilcox, Nundah, Australia.

Chart show

I WOULD FIRST like to congratulate you on an excellent mag. There are many reasons why I prefer your mag to the other so-called PC magazines. One of the main reasons I bought a PC (a 386 DX40) was to play games like *Stunt Island* and *X-Wing*.

I receive two PC magazines every month and I find *PC Zone* offers a great deal more than any other mag. It is dedicated to the games player and it has little of the incomprehensible technical jargon. The reviews are more in-depth than any other mag I have come across and, with a price tag of just £3.95 with two cover disks (which very few mags have), it is very good value.

'Nothing is perfect,' the saying goes, but I believe *PC Zone* could be perfect if it included one more feature: a chart to show the most popular games of that particular month. Surely this is a must for any 100% games mag.

Anyway, to get to the original reason I am writing to you. My PC is fairly new and it had never been checked for viruses - probably because I didn't have a virus checker!

Then, on 1 July, my monthly copy of *PC Zone* dropped through the door. The first thing I noticed was the *F-prot* anti-virus utility included on one of the cover disks. I installed this on my hard disk and then ran a check on my drive c. And guess what? It found a virus. The *COMMAND.COM* file of *XTree Gold* had been infected. The culprit: a variation of the *Cascade* virus.

F-prot soon sorted this out and enabled me to check my meagre collection of floppy disks. I would like to thank *PC Zone* for providing this piece of software, and *Frisk* software for writing it in the

first place. If I didn't have this piece of very useful software, the letters on my screen could be at this very minute falling to the bottom and forming a big heap (the effects of the virus).

Michael Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

Readers' writes

I HAVE GIVEN up strong beer and strong women and, in their place, have bought myself a porky 486 PC. I subscribed to your mag and received the excellent *Chuck Yeager* flight sim, flew around at speed and got blown to hell!

Before buying the PC, I owned an Amiga; the software for this was much cheaper, especially the public domain software. But, more than once, I ended up with a lot of software that never saw the light of day. So, this time, I thought I'd just buy the best software.

Having read all the reviews in different mags I brought *S.W.O.T.L.* and it's just like *Battle of Britain 1940* on the Amiga, i.e., crap.

Now, reading *Wordprocessor* and the articles on new games, I find reference to *S.W.O.T.L.*'s shortcomings - a bit late now!

So, please would you consider a reader's Right To Reply column, with long-term views on software, as I may need to save money soon, to spend on strong women again.

ps. Please would you run an article on flight sim controls such as those of *Thrustmaster*, *Free Flight*, *Virtual Pilot* and *Suncom Flight Yoke*.

pps. Is the *Car And Driver* game by Electronic Arts viewed first-person, like *Grand Prix* by MicroProse?

Ken Rankin, Westbury on Trym, Bristol.

The readers' Right To Reply column is a good idea and one we're looking at introducing. In fact, we have plans to go a stage further than that - turn to the subscriptions page for more information. A flight sim control feature is probably on the cards, and *Car And Driver* has a first-person option. **Ed.**

Presley lives

ONE OF YOUR reviewers, Paul Presley, doesn't appear in the row of Zonal Staff. Why? Is it because he doesn't appear in pictures (undead or something)?

Jeffrey Mott, Brentwood, Essex.

Almost. It's more a case of him not appearing in the office when pictures are being taken. **Ed.**

A problem shared

CALL ME IGNORANT, call me stupid, call me 'Fluffy Ears' if you really want to, but my friends call me Paul. Anyway, I have a number of personal problems that I'm trying to deal with myself, and a problem with shareware which I was rather hoping you might be able to help me with.

It's this: I have access to a modem and various bulletin boards' 'phone numbers, but whenever I try to download a file, I get asked obscure questions like 'Do you have: XModem YModem ZModem (pumpnickel option class 87 bunyip doogee-flop compatible),' etc. I've tried various options but, whichever I select, the *Windows Terminal* program

just sits there, and I don't know whether anything is downloading or not. Given this is all costing 38p per minute, my nerve fails me and I hang up. Can you give me a few hints about downloading games?

Also, I wonder if any of your other readers have noticed the amazing likeness between Andy Butcher and the evil Captain Black, sworn enemy of Captain Scarlet. I wonder if, by any chance, they are related?

I think *PC Zone* is really good, etc., etc.

Paul Minty, London.

Windows Terminal is not the easiest program to get on with. We use the Shareware program *MicroLink* for UK BBS, and *WigWam* and *PowWow* for Compuserve. Once you have set up the baud rate and bits (see your modem for the first, the second is usually eight) set the modem type (Hayes, generally), the phone number and the emulation type (choose DEC VT-100 if unsure) - the rest is plain sailing. *Windows* supports *XModem* and *Kermit*, so check *XModem* in the 'Binary Transfers' dialogue box. When the BBS asks you what protocol you are using, type in the letter or number for *XModem Batch*. Then click on the 'receive binary file' option in the transfer menu. A little bar should appear, showing that the file is coming in. That's it. (Somehow, I feel this letter should be in *Bits & PCs*). **Ed.**

No fun

INSTEAD OF watching the Wimbledon tournament, I spent the past two weeks reading your crummy magazine. I even forfeited two centre-court tickets so that I could stay home with the newly arrived issue. And you know what? All I got could find in the mag were duff 'in-jokes', as Duncan MacDonald described them in issue four, in his review of *Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist*: '...jokes only the programmer (the editor in this case) and his mate Reg (i.e., the contributors) find funny.'

But, if you present me with your Letter of the Month award, I promise to keep my mouth shut.

Alon Navon, London, NW11.

But think of the money we have saved you on strawberries. **Ed.**

Ramblers anonymous

HAVING HAD THE opportunity to read the first three issues of *PC Zone*, I am still one of those (probably few) readers who remain unsure about whether to subscribe. While many of the reviews and blueprints are well written, there does seem to be a significant minority of reviews that seem to have been rushed through on a Friday night after a heavy session down the local.

Not wishing to mention any names, the lesser-quality offerings invariably begin with a long, rambling introductory paragraph that seems, to an untrained observer like myself, to have very little to do with the game, including a limited repertoire of four-letter words as padding.

I am sure that your counter-argument to this will be that the reviews need to be cunning (unreadable) and interesting to keep readers hooked. While this is no doubt true, it surely does

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Each month, we award a piece of software to the month's Star Letter. And just to prove that flattery gets you nowhere, this month's winner is less than impressed...

Long live the 386

As a new recruit to the ranks of the PC owners club, I have been reading your magazine with interest. What concerns me most is the fact that you seem to be consigning anything less than a 486 to the dustbin.

I have just bought a 386SX 33MHz machine with a 105Mb drive. With windows accelerator, sound card, reasonable monitor, bubble jet printer and software (*Works, CorelDRAW!*) the whole shooting match cost me a grand. I would obviously have loved to have had a ninja 486, but scraping the grand together was enough of a struggle. I have four friends who also became PC owners in the last six months, and all have only been able to run to a 386.

The PC market seems to be taking off in a big way; the shops are full of PC magazines, and my local software shop is being taken over by PC games. I feel sure that, with the price of PCs, the majority of people who are fuelling this success are recent owners of 386 machines like mine. So it becomes a bit distressing to find that magazines are telling us that our new pride and joy is out of date and that it is time to bin that relic and get a 486.

Well, financially, that is out of the question. And if software houses start to leave me behind, I'm afraid that is where I will have to stay. At the moment, my machine seems to run most things although, given the review, it would seem that *Strike Commander* would be like watching girders rust on my 386.

If the software producers are hoping to make the 486 the standard, they will be killing the goose that is just about to lay a golden egg, before it has even managed to squeeze it out.

Progress is wonderful; I am no Luddite, but I think that people like yourselves who have access to the cutting edge of technology tend to forget about Joe Public with his limited resources.

For the software developers, the temptation to produce graphics that rip your visual cortex out when run on a 486DX 66MHz must be just to tempting, but the same thing running on my machine would be in Yawnerama.

What I am really trying to say is: 'PC Zone and software houses - remember that we aren't all made of money.'

PS. I forgot to mention, your magazine makes me laugh, thanks.

Gary P Chapman, New Milton, Hampshire.

I sympathise with your argument but it's not the magazines who are trying to abandon the 386. We review the software, not design it. If a game is clearly aimed at the 486 and is significantly worse on a 386, we would be doing our readers a disservice not to mention the fact. Although programmers are obviously keen to use the latest technology, it's still only a minority of games that are blatantly targeted at the 486. There's life in the 386 yet. By the way, where on earth did you get all that kit for a grand? Ed.

not justify up to 50% of an article being devoted to irrelevant comments and bawdy humour.

With the accompanying use of extremely large graphic images of the game, on occasions the actual review content boils down to not more than one column of a three-page article.

I hope that you don't get the impression that I am campaigning for humourless, boring articles in *PC Zone*, but perhaps you could exercise a little more editorial rigour in making sure that poorly written reviews do not slip the net too often.

David Webb, Shepperton, Middlesex.

Australian football

THIS LETTER is all the way from Australia; it cost a bit to post, so it had better get printed. My compliments on a great mag. The only drawback is that here it costs 12 Australian dollars... However, a software prize for the best letter would definitely make up for that.

Oh, and could you please answer these questions for me:

1. Is *Premier Manager* worth buying?
2. Am I the only one who has a fetish for manager games?
3. Why do games cost so much?

I thank you in advance for answering my questions.

PS. Tell the HackMasters™ to get a life.

M Burtleigh, Dickson, Australia.

1. I'm quite fond of it, though it's a tad limited - check issue five for the full review.

2. Just you and the whole of the *PC Zone* office.

3. Have you got a spare hour or six? Ed.

Windows

A FAITHFUL READER - me - with every single one of your issues to date, is just writing in to say: Why did you leave the Windows slot out of the *Buyer's Guide* in issues two, three and four of *PC Zone*? I am positive that there must be a perfectly simple explanation.

PS. keep up the brilliant work.

James Malone, Kilkenny, Ireland.

The Windows section was dropped because we felt it was a bit of a false category which served little or no useful purpose. Instead, we decided to mention which games could be played through Windows in the main body of the guide. Ed.

Spec-ulation

I AM WRITING to congratulate you on your excellent magazine, and especially on your cover disks - gone are the days when I would buy a magazine only to find that the disks had only one small game, with the rest of the space filled up with so-called 'useful' utilities.

I feel I should give special mention to your *Buyer's Guide*, which looks like a feature that will grow into a very useful source of reference.

However, on your 'Specs' section at the end of a review, could you give both the minimum total RAM required and the minimum free RAM required? In addition, in the 'Minimum Graphics Support' part of this section, it would be extremely useful if you could you tell us all the graphic cards that the game supports?

In your review of *Reach for the Skies*, for instance, you say that the minimum graphics are EGA; does this mean that, on my SVGA monitor, I will get only EGA graphics?

Finally, could you, in your *Boot Up* section, tell us the minimum specifications to run each game on the cover disks? I thank you again for your brilliant magazine and hope for its long success.

Anatto, Exeter, Devon.

Your point about video cards is a good one - the *Minimum Graphics* refers to the minimum graphics card you need to play the game; usually it will run in all superior graphics modes to the minimum stated. However, I agree that it's not clear enough and we will be changing it. Likewise, your comment on the cover disks, although we do try to run that information when it's available. Ed.

Empty vessels

A GREEN ISSUE: Why is it that so much cardboard and plastic is completely wasted in the packaging of PC games? I recently opened my games cupboard and was faced with a large stack of empty boxes most of which were unnecessarily large for the game enclosed.

My newest game, *Syndicate*, has a box that is two inches deep, 11 inches long and about ten inches wide, a sleeve to keep it all together, and still more packaging to hold the disks in place. All this for five disks, a poster and a book. A large paper envelope would have sufficed - and would have saved God knows how many trees.

When will someone realise that a big box does not make a good product.

PS. Is there any chance of printing some hints and tips on a rather old game, *Dungeon Master*, because I am stuck?

A K Sore, Preston, Lancs.

Presley in monastery shock

IT WOULD SEEM THAT Paul Presley is out of a job. I am of course referring to his sardonic review of *The 7th Guest*, in which he states: '...if, in a few months, I look at the top ten charts and see *The 7th Guest* selling like hot cakes then I'm packing it all in. I'll give up writing articles...', and so on. Guess what? *The 7th Guest* has made it to number one in the CD ROM chart and is also doing well in the standard PC sales chart. Good luck in your new career as a monk Paul. I do hope he keeps his promise which he broadcast to every *PC Zone* reader in issue four, otherwise I'm sure we'd all have our doubts about reading further reviews from a dishonest reviewer. How can we tell if a game is better or worse than the score that Paul gives it? Unless he does become a monk and then we will all enjoy reading his reviews as we would know they were truthful, but then again monks don't usually write computer reviews, especially in Tibet. However, perhaps a subscription to *PC Zone* would make me forget that Paul ever wrote those words...?

Gavin Clark, Canterbury, Kent.

Well Paul didn't actually specify which chart he was referring to and there's certainly no sign of *The 7th Guest* on *Top of the Pops* or the *ITV Chart Show*. Mind you, come to think of it, he hasn't been round the office much of late and we have been receiving some very bizarre postcards postmarked Shangri La. Ed.





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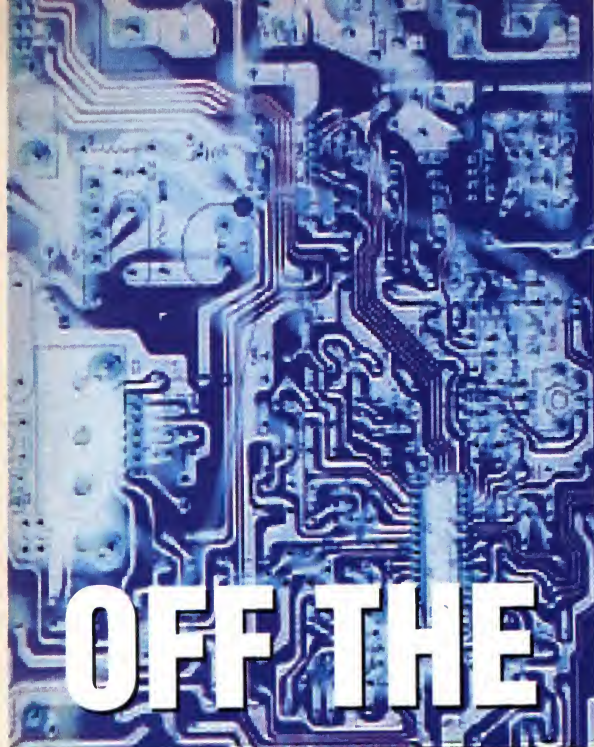
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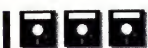
OFF THE BOARDS

Mark Burgess skips the light fandango and turns cartwheels across the floor on another trip into that last bastion of '60s ideology: the world of PD and Shareware.

MEGATRON VGA

THE YEAR IS 3015 and you have entered the combat labyrinth on planet Altar-4 to hunt down and destroy your adversary's robot. You have two assault robots with armour piercing missiles, plasma bolts and mines. At the game's start both robots are placed at random locations in the maze. You don't know where the other robot is, but you have a 3D view of the corridor, a map of the labyrinth and a sonar blip to guide you to him. You can use radar but it doesn't always lead you to your foe, yet he always finds you. You must also win more combat rounds than him, which is a matter of being fastest on the draw.

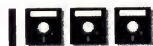
A powerful computer is needed - at least 386/25MHZ and preferably a 486/33MHZ. I found it jerky on a 486DX 25MHZ. For best results you also need at least 1Mb of EMS memory free or a 1Mb disk cache. 640K free base RAM is needed to run this VGA-only game which takes up 1.3Mb on your hard drive. *Megatron* is best as a two-player game, but to play using two computers you need a serial port with a modem (expensive) or null-modem cable connecting the computers. In single player mode, the game is rather boring. Shareware by John Stanley for Stanley Design Team; registration \$25.00 (mega61.zip 533,992 bytes.).



Megatron: Bleurghh! So that's what they mean by a technicoloured yawn.

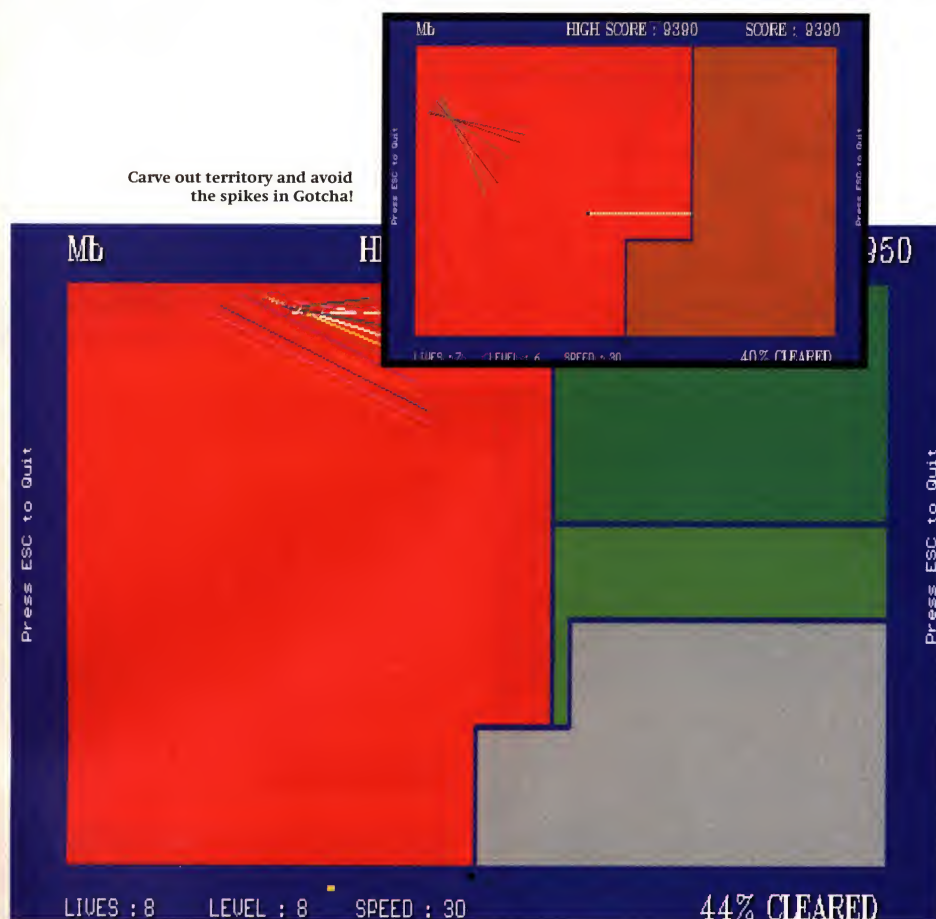
GATEWORLD

THIS IS A *Duke Nukem*-style platform game with you playing the part of Buzz Klondike. Marooned on an asteroid you have to collect gems and gold - as well as energy, ammunition and pretzels. There are other inhabitants, not all of them harmful. Eloi just get in the way and the bouncing eyeballs can actually help you. Otherwise there are the Loyals, who need shooting, Wombats and the indestructible gatekeepers. Each level has a key which you need to get on to the next level. The game is nothing special and looks a bit dated. It also has the frustrating pixel-critical manoeuvres common in shareware platform games. If you liked *Duke Nukem*, give this one a try. Shareware by HomeBrew. Needs 560K free RAM. Supports joystick and keyboard. Registration (£25.50) from PSP (0223 208 288) brings the next two episodes. (gtwrl16.exe 736,384 bytes.)



SCORING

At last, *Off The Boards* gets a scoring system. Of course it's just as subjective as the old verbal summary, but it means you'll have a better idea of how similar programs compare. All the scores are out of five, with five reserved for real classics like *Fractint* or *Wolfenstein*.



ZANTI!

ZANTI! IS A WINDOWS 3.X game that needs you to visualise a path and think ahead. The object is to guide the Zanti invaders along the garden path until they reach the ending piece. When they do, the Earth's military will wipe them out and you win. In fact, it's *Pipedreams*. It's also in a fairly early version (v. 0.7b, Beta Test) so there are bugs. And it comes with .BMP files of women in bikinis for some reason (they don't figure in the game).

You can tell from which side the Zantis will emerge by watching the ship - the hatch opens about 8 seconds before they come out. Any time that you try to replace an existing piece, you must wait about a second for the operation to complete... so try to put them in the right place with the first try.

The score is based on how long the game lasts, minus a penalty for how many unused pieces you put on the board. The longer you keep the game going, the more points you get, but you can get a negative score if you just fill the board with pieces.

You can place the game on 'hold' and adjust the speed of the Zandis marching. Support Windows Multimedia sounds (Sound Blaster, etc.). Registration \$5.00 (cash only) gets you the full, unbugged version, once it's written. By PSS/LLCT, the program needs VBRUN200.DLL to be present in the path. (zant07.zip 1,278,483 bytes.)

GOTCHA!

THIS IS A VERSION of the old arcade game, *Qixx*. A bit like *Q-Bert*, you have to block off areas of colour and avoid the meanies. Nice, unpretentious version with easy control and variable speed. Shareware by Don Herring. Registration (\$10.00) brings full version. (gotcha.zip 56,320 bytes.)



PROTEC

GERMANY IS PRODUCING quite an amount of shareware these days. This is a pinball simulator which will while away an hour or two. The controls are nice and easy; left and right control for the flippers, left and right shift for nudge and enter to launch. Sound effects are not much cop but you can turn them off. Once when I used the nudge, the program said: 'Warning Headcrash'. Quite exciting! Registration (DM29) brings a high score table, four-player mode and full game description. By Wilfried Lottermoser. (prot1.zip 87,497 bytes.)



These programs were downloaded from Compuserve using WigWam for CIS.

WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that you do not pass the work off as your own, do not incorporate it within another program without due credit and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE

This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or 'if found useful'. The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program although it is true that many programs ask you to send \$5.00 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90% of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

BANNERWARE/ ADWARE

This is a program where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free licence to use and copy the game.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50.00 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file. Typing in the name of it should load the program.

Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760K disk. The files will have extensions like .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, .ZIP or (very rare) .ZOO but the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

The Game of

Ultralife
(Main) 2 R-
pentomino
after 1400
generations.
(Inset) The
same after a
mere 385
generations.



ULTRALIFE

A BIT UNFRIENDLY until you get used to it, after which this is the best of the lot for features. This program has masses of documentation and a good library of automata, including the Glider Gun and other classics. Many useful options, although the lack of a grid during drawing is a pain. Registration (\$25.00) gets a data disk with more automata. From CA Software. (ultralife.exe 92,288 bytes.)



Ultralife: (Top) The Glider Gun. (Middle) A Glider Gun in action. (Middle Bottom) The Greek letter pi. (Bottom) After 60 generations.



IN JUNE 1948 John von Neumann gave three lectures at Princeton University on the subject of self-reproducing machines. By that he meant machines that were able to make copies of themselves from available materials. In describing what these automata (as he called them) would need and how they would work, Neumann anticipated the work of Crick and Watson by four years and unconsciously described the way every living cell operates.

A colleague, Stanislaw Ulam, suggested that Neumann investigate automata in an indefinitely large two dimensional space. Ulam had used such 'cellular' techniques to study crystals. Neumann rose to the challenge and founded a whole new branch of mathematics: cellular automata theory.

In 1970 a Cambridge mathematician called John Conway invented a game based on cellular automata theory called *Life*. The game is played on a vast two-dimensional plane divided into squares or cells. Cells are surrounded by eight other cells and can be 'alive' (on) or 'dead' (off). The rules are simple:

- ① A live cell will remain alive if it has two or three live neighbours.
- ② A cell with one live neighbour will die ('loneliness').
- ③ A cell with more than three live neighbours will die ('overcrowding').
- ④ A dead cell will come alive when surrounded by three live neighbours.

The program spread through the computer community like wildfire. Various arrangements of cells were discovered and named. There was the prolific R-pentomino that exploded into a micro universe within generations; cells that chugged across the screen like trains, or which oscillated indefinitely. There was also the glider, a five-cell arrangement that drifted through space forever.

Conway thought that none of his automata could actually expand forever and offered a prize of \$50.00 to anyone who came up with a finite configuration of live cells that would grow without limit. Barely a month after the reward had been announced in the October issue of *Scientific American*, a mathematician called Bill Gosper claimed it. He had discovered the Glider Gun - an arrangement of cells that shoots out gliders indefinitely.

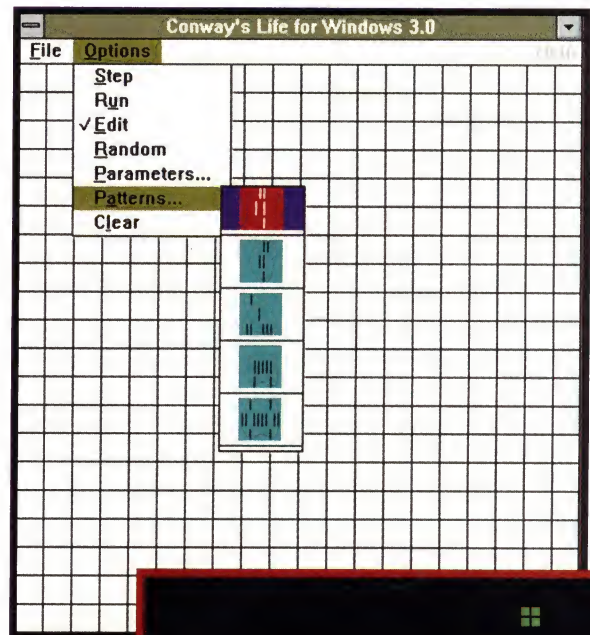
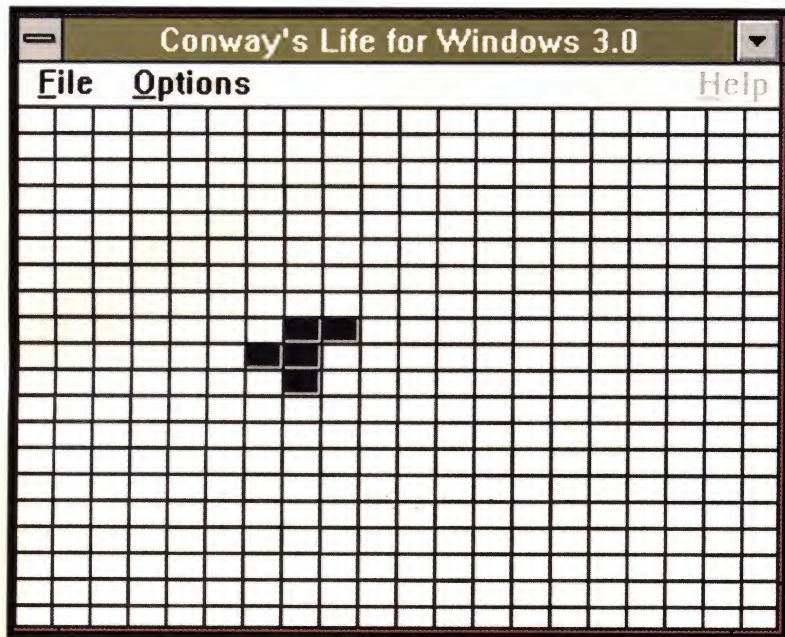
As these cells are simply on/off switches, it occurred to people that they could emulate computers - which are themselves only boxes of on/off switches. Stephen Wolfram at the Institute for Advanced Study tried for many years, unsuccessfully. Conway saw that the game of *Life* was theoretically able to be a universal computer - a Turing machine - but a practical demonstration has eluded everyone. Wolfram followed in Conway's footsteps and laid down a challenge in the May 1985 issue of *Scientific American*:

'Lurking among [cellular automata] are true computers, vast linear arrays of cells blinking from state to state and churning out any calculations a three dimensional computer is capable of.' The prize is uncollected. Go to it.

**'Wolfram's
\$50 prize is
uncollected.
Go to it'**

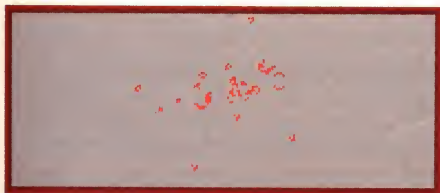


In 1970 the Cambridge mathematician invented a game that modelled life itself. If you wondered what on earth *U-Life* was about (cover disk issue five) here is the place to find out.



LIFE FOR WINDOWS

THIS IS A PD program by Kevin Reilly. It comes with various pre-set patterns and is a good version to while away Windows sessions. Not many features and a small grid (up to 99 x 99) but pleasing to the eye. (lifelife.zip 182,709 bytes.)



Big Life: R-pentomino after 360 generations.

BIGLIFE

THE WORST display of the lot. It's almost impossible to see what's going on if you have any normal monitor. There is no grid to help you draw, which you can only do with single pixels. It also crashes a fair bit. No documentation either. Not a strong contender. (blife10v.exe 44,709 bytes.)



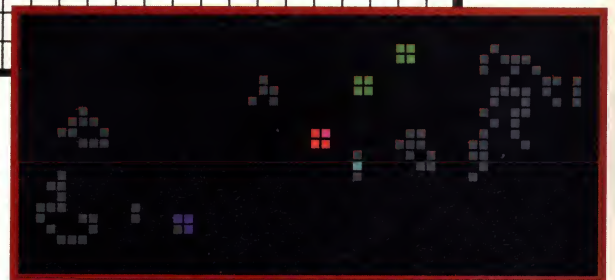
LIFE FORMS

ANOTHER ONE that could do better. This is a program that will run on machines from the PCjr upwards. You can edit the attributes of the organisms and their environment. There is a library of 66 types, but I didn't recognise any standards. In fact the rules seemed unusual. Every life form - even straight lines - swiftly populates the universe. This is not *Life* as we know it, Jim. PD from Charles Platt. (lifform.exe 78,464 bytes.)



CELL WAR

THIS ISN'T A pure implementation of *Life* (he sniffs), but is based on it. It is a game where you play another human or the computer, which can be dumb or smart. The object is to dominate the board with your organism, following the rules of *Life*. It results in a strategy game a bit like *Go* or *Hexagon*. Shareware by Al Funk (it says here), registration \$5.00. Quite fun, and if you feel cellular automata aren't interactive enough, try it. Think of all the jokes you can make about beating your computer at the game of life. (cellwar.zip 72726 bytes.)



(Top) Life for Windows - the prolific R-pentomino and options. (Bottom) VGA Life - R pentomino after 93 generations.

VGALIFE

AVERY NICE PD version from Larry Hoppis, this program is now in its ninth version. Written in Turbo Pascal, it needs an AT with 256K free RAM and a VGA monitor. Options include saving at any time, file restore, controllable rate of update and (on the large matrix) a 'pacer' that shows updating is taking place. Colour cycling changes the colour every 12 generations.

There are three grids; small (126 x 85), medium (158 x 142) and large (212 x 216). The grids themselves are only used for drawing and are hidden when plotting. Small is ideal for exploring, the medium is the most versatile and large is fastest, as it uses single pixels. The save/restore function does not have a menu system as does *Ultralife* and there is no library of automata. (lifevga.exe 43,136 bytes.)



All DOS Life programs were downloaded from the Farm BBS using the shareware program MicroLink.

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ON THE BOARDS

Handshaking protocols? *Mark Burgess* rolls up his trouser leg and initiates you into the arcane world of modems.

THE HARDWARE



IF YOU WANT to download shareware and talk to other computer addicts you need to contact a Bulletin Board (BBS). And to do that you need a modem. Your computer can talk to another, but the language they use is digital. A modem (modulator/demodulator) converts the binary 1s and 0s into tones that the analogue telephone lines can carry. Unless you have one of the few computers with a modem built-in, you will have to buy one.

The first choice is: internal or external? An internal modem consists of a card and some sort of external line interface. They are cheaper than external modems and are no longer less powerful. External modems connect to the serial port and have the advantage of being easily transportable between computers. External modems have various lights that keep you informed about what's going on, but there are programs to emulate this for internal modems (e.g. *WinModem*).

When you go to buy your modem, the important question is how fast it can transfer data. This is measured in bits per second (or bps). Divide this figure by ten for a rough idea of how many characters per second that means. Current rates are as follows:

| STANDARD | RECEIVE | TRANSMIT |
|----------|---------|----------|
| V21 | 300 | 300 |
| V22 | 1,200 | 1,200* |
| V22bis | 2,400 | 2,400 |
| V23 | 1,200 | 600† |
| V26bis | 1,200 | 2,400* |
| V27ter | 2,400 | 4,800* |
| V32 | 9,600 | 9,600 |
| V32bis | 14,400 | 14,400* |

A v32 modem using v42bis compression can be set to 38,400bps although the actual data is still sent across at 9,600bps. The difference in the speed of signal lets the modem's CPU compress and sort outgoing data or decompress incoming. If data is going into a modem four times faster than it is being taken out there is a danger of some sort of overflow. Hardware (RTS & CTS) or software (XOFF & XON) flow control is used to tell the sending modem that the memory in the receiving modem is full. The sending modem then stops sending until told to resume. Hardware flow control is preferred because incoming data could contain the software flow control codes (CTRL-S & CTRL-Q).

As well as the speed of transfer, modems differ on error correction and data compression. Error correction involves the receiving modem

THOSE LIGHTS IN FULL

CTS: Catholic Truth Society. No, it's really Clear To Send and tells the computer that it is ready to send more data. It's a handshake or flow control signal.

CD: Carrier Detect. This shows that contact has been made and that the carrier signal is good. This indicator is also called DCD (Data Carrier Detect) or RLSD (Receive Line Signal Detect).

RI: Ring Indicate, the presence of an incoming call.

MR: Modem Ready (or DSR: Data Set Ready) tells the computer that the modem is on and ready. It's a handshake signal so the computer replies with DTR: Data Terminal Ready to let the modem know that it is switched on and ready. Cosy, huh?

TD: Transmit Data modem has data from the computer to send.

RD: Receive Data modem has received data from the line to pass to the computer.

checking the data and sending a message to the transmitting modem asking it to re-transmit. Data compression, as the term suggests, means less time on line and so lower bills. Both these features can be implemented by software (slow) or hardware.

ERROR CORRECTION AND DATA COMPRESSION

ADC: Hayes Adaptive Data Compression; compression to about 2:1.

LAPM: Link Access Procedure for Modems. This error correction is included in v42/v42bis. It is *not* a compression method.

MNP1-4: Microcom Network Protocol classes of error control*.

MNP 5: Data compression to about 50%.

TCM: Trellis Coded Modulation - an error control used in many v32 modems. It gives high protection against 'noise' errors by using differential encoding and redundancy at bit level rather than building data 'packets' with added CRC as do v42 or MNP.

v42: Standard of error correction used on 9,600bps and some 2,400bps modems. Includes LAPM and MNP classes 2-4.

v42bis: Data compression standard of 3:1 (sometimes 4:1) won't work with compressed files (obviously).

The standard for modems is that set by Hayes so make sure that yours is Hayes-compatible, although I don't know of any that aren't.

In the old days getting computers to talk to each other was a frustrating task. The 'phone lines were bad, the modems were 'acoustic couplers': a kind of cradle for the telephone handset. The software was awful and the computers themselves were vastly underpowered and ruggedly different from each other. Now all the hassle of setting up the modem is done swiftly and easily from the software. All you really have to do is enter the 'phone numbers of who you want to call and the file protocol. The protocol is just the method by which your files will be transferred.

Few BBS are organised in a logical way, so you might spend a lot of time on-line trying to locate files. A script will help you here. It generates the response to the dozy questions you are normally asked and sends them much faster than you could type. Another time saver is an off-line reader, which stores incoming files and messages for you to decompress, sort and read once you have left the BBS.

THE EIGHT PROTOCOLS

ASCII: Text files sent as is, without any special codes.

Kermit: Almost error free. Used for text files.

Xmodem: First widespread standard. Uses blocks of 128 bytes with 1 byte checksum. Re-sends the whole block if an error is discovered.

Xmodem/CRC: As Xmodem but with 16-bit CRC instead of a checksum.

Xmodem-1K: Like Xmodem/CRC except it uses 1Kb blocks.

Ymodem: Can transfer more than one file at a time and includes file name and length. Uses 1Kb or 128 byte blocks and 16-bit CRC if possible (otherwise a 1 byte checksum).

Ymodem-g: Uses CRC and aborts if an error occurs during transmission. Best protocol for error-correcting modems. The 'g' refers to the fact that it transmits a G rather than a C to initiate batch transfer thus bypassing the usual wait for an ACK signal.

Zmodem: Fast with crash recovery, auto-download and 32-bit CRC capability. Sends information about the files it transmits. Closest to error free.

SOME ODD PROTOCOLS:

CompuServe B: Like Xmodem but host controlled, no matter what the direction of transmission. Checksum error, 1Kb blocks.

CompuServe B+: A logical progression of the above with CRC and up to 2Kb blocks.

HS/Link: Like Zmodem except that has bi-directional capacity.

MPT: For text files. Like Zmodem (but not compatible).

NOTE: Always prefer CRC to Checksum protocols

*Yesterday's standard - not to be despised
†Usually implemented as 1,200/75

*rare
†The bee's knees

*Classes 1-3 slow things down.
NOTE: No matter what the ads say, V42bis or MNPS will *not* increase the speed of a modems, although they make a modem more efficient.

DOS

THE SOFTWARE

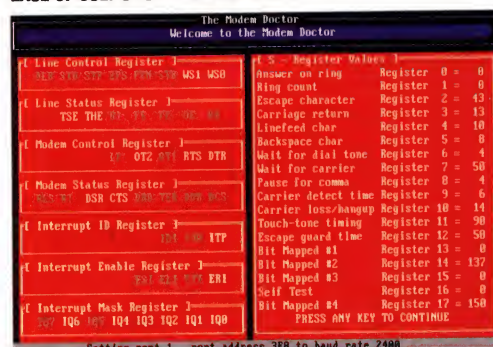
In keeping with the spirit of things, these are all shareware packages.



EzziLink v3.4

Written in the UK, a very comprehensive package with a Prestel/Viewdata emulator. A bit like the commercial leader, ProComm Plus. Archive about 273,990 bytes. Registration £25.00.

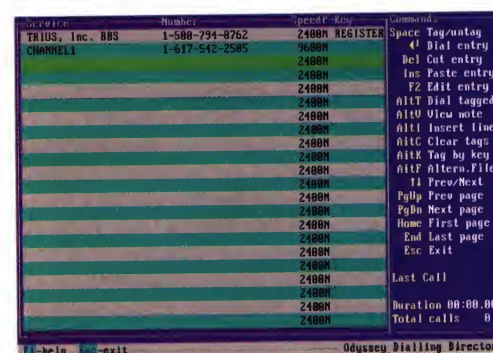
EASE OF USE: ① ② POWER: ① ② ③ ④



Modem Doctor v5.0s

Useful program that performs 60 tests on your serial ports, modem and even the motherboard. Automatic IRQ detection, interrupt latency tests, support for fossil drivers - we're talking techie heaven here. The program is very easy to use. Registration \$19.00.

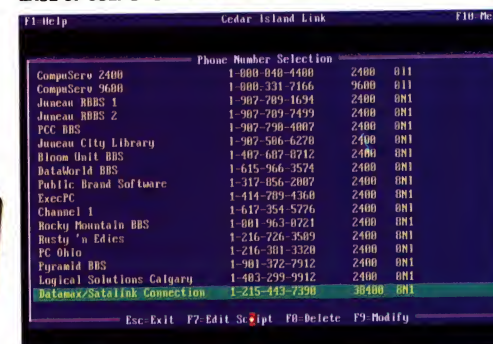
EASE OF USE: ① ② ③ ④ POWER: ① ② ③ ④



Odyssey v1.5

People rave about this program. Not my own favourite, I must admit, but a flexible and easy package. Loads of features, menu driven. Registration £108.57. Self-extracting archive should come in at about 349,915 bytes.

EASE OF USE: ① ② POWER: ① ② ③ ④

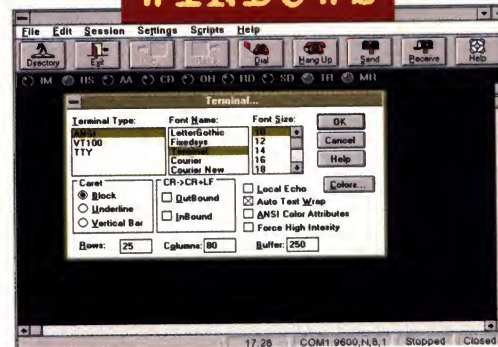


Cedar Island Link v2.55

Simple to use mouse-based comms program. Features scripts, macros and an auto.gif viewer. Registration \$25.00. Self-extracting archive about 356,651 bytes.

EASE OF USE: ① ② ③ POWER: ① ② ③ ④

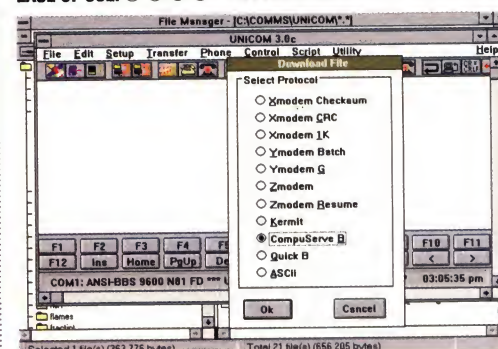
WINDOWS



MicroLink v1.04

Easy to use with a natty front end. Modem lights, tool bar, full VT100 emulation and all popular protocols. Full on-line help and very friendly. This is the one I use. About 226,744 bytes, registration \$35.00.

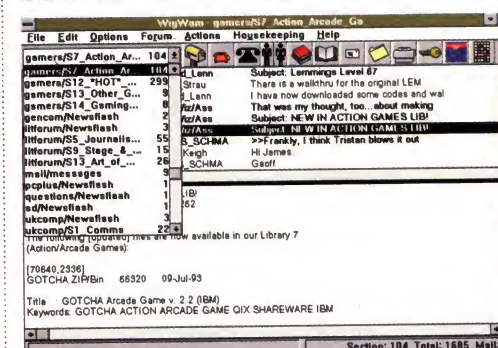
EASE OF USE: ① ② ③ ④ POWER: ① ② ③



Unicom v3.1

Powerful comms program supporting all popular protocols and with auto-downloading. Colour Terminal Emulation together with ANSI, DECVT52, ANSI-BBS and TTY. Powerful script language and host mode. Modem lights! Auto.gif viewer and more. Typical compressed size 354,114. Registration \$80.00.

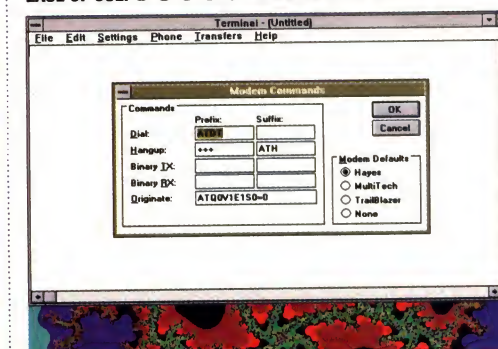
EASE OF USE: ① ② ③ ④ POWER: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤



WigWam for CIs/WigWam for CIs

Not really shareware, but a working demo (only the 'Prune' function is disabled). Can be downloaded from Compuserve or obtained from Omicron Systems. State of the art off-line reader. Full version £65.00. As used by PC Zone!

EASE OF USE: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ POWER: ① ② ③ ④



Windows Terminal

Comes free with Windows. That's the good news. The bad news:

EASE OF USE: ① ② POWER: ① ②



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- 102-Key PS/2 Type Keyboard
- Dimensions - 325mm (w) x 78mm (h) x 292mm (d)

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- Power - 65W (110-240V Auto-Sensing)
- Supplied Accessories - PS/2 Type PC Mouse, Precision Analogue PC Joystick, Sega Compatible Games Pad
- Software - MS-DOS v5.0 + Amstrad Desktop Graphical Interface + Interactive Tutor (pre-installed).
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Special Edition
Life & Death II
The Brain
Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing

MEGA PLUS 486SLC for £799 + VAT

INC VGA COLOUR MONITOR + HARD DRIVE

LANDMARK v2.00 PERFORMANCE COMPARISON CHART

| 386sx 16MHz | 386sx 20MHz | 386sx 25MHz | 386sx 33MHz | 386sx 40MHz | 486sx 16MHz | 486sx 20MHz | 486sx 25MHz | 486sx 33MHz | 486SLC 33MHz |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 20 | 25 | 31 | 47 | 51 | 66 | 54 | 67 | 84 | 92 |
| MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz | MHz |

Silica Systems are pleased to present an upgraded version of the Mega PC, called the Mega 'Plus'. This has been upgraded with the revolutionary 486SLC 33MHz CPU, manufactured by Texas Instruments and jointly developed with Cyrix. This chip is a 33MHz 486 instruction set compatible micro processor with a 32-bit internal data path, 1K internal cache and power management features. Power meter aggregate MIPS performance is increased by up to 2 times and it boasts an overall performance of 92MHz using Landmark's latest version Speedcom 2.00 benchmark. This is almost 3 times as fast as a 386sx - 25 CPU (see Landmark Speed Chart above). The 'Mega Plus' 486SLC 33MHz PC comes in two versions - 40Mb hard drive with 2Mb RAM at £799-VAT and 130Mb hard drive with 4Mb RAM at £899-VAT.

- Processor and clock speed, PC Mode: 486SLC 33MHz
- 2Mb or 4Mb RAM
- Maths Co-Processor Socket for 487SLC
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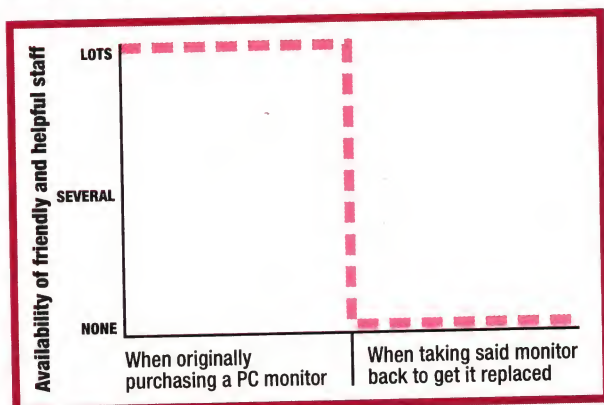


Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF HIS PC



TOOK MY recently purchased monitor back to the shop where I bought it, in order to get it replaced with one that actually *works*. The experience inspired a graph – though don't ask me why; something to do with nostalgia, maybe – which I shall share with you now...



(Above) 'Crapograph 1', which could also be applied to the lovely staff in post offices and to the sudden, inexplicable breakdowns of cashpoint machines.
(Right) 'Crapograph 2', showing the digestive biscuit intake of a pilot and his navigator during a bombing attack on an early warning radar station, plotted against waypoints.

Anyway, that's enough about my errant monitor; on to the main subject matter for this month's column: a bloke called Buffy. I'll explain.

I've been playing Digital Integration's *Tornado* almost non-stop since it came in to the office (in between comparatively restful bursts of *Star Control 2*, *Stunt Island* and *Microprose Grand Prix*), and now consider myself something of an expert on the intricacies of modern aerial warfare. And, to add to this 'hands on' experience, I was fortunate enough to meet, down the pub, the aforementioned 'Buffy'. (I'd have been more surprised had I met someone called Buffy anywhere but down the pub.)

Buffy is a real life *Tornado* pilot, and he filled me in on a lot of the 'behind the scenes' activities at your average airbase in a war situation – he was in the Gulf conflict, so he should know.

Digestive biscuits

Tornado aircrews, according to Buffy, judge their mission successes on the quantity of digestive biscuit ration remaining once they've returned to their airbase, and also on the ratio of biscuits consumed by each crew member.

It works like this: In every *Tornado*, at the start of a mission, you'll find a large pack of digestive biscuits, balanced on top of the navigator's control panel (so it's easily reached by both airmen). After take-off, and as soon as the first waypoint is crossed, the packet is opened and the pilot and navigator help themselves to a couple of biscuits. From there on in, further biscuits are only taken if the airman in question isn't too busy doing something else – piloting, shooting, map-reading; that sort of thing.

One: a successful TIALD bombing raid

On reaching the first waypoint, the pilot and navigator each eat two biscuits; then it's time for the aircraft to ascend to 20,000 feet. During this ascent, the pilot – who has to muck around with autopilot settings – may eat a further two digestives, while the navigator – who has sod all to do, since

all clouds look the same – may eat four or more. Buffy's navigator Quentin actually managed 12 during one ascent.

Once the aircraft is at attack height, however, the boot moves onto the other foot, because the navigator has everything to do while the pilot can put his feet up. According to Buffy, the navigator on a TIALD attack phase is so busy, what with his moving map display, camera view and laser designator, that he hasn't the time to eat any biscuits at all. During this same period, however, the pilot may cram in anything between ten and 20.

Once the bombing has taken place, the pilot and navigator are free to eat as many as they can handle until the airfield approach waypoint is reached – whereupon any remaining digestives are sealed in a Tupperware container, along with a note of how many biscuits each crew member has consumed. This Tupperware container is ceremoniously handed to a superior officer for evaluation.

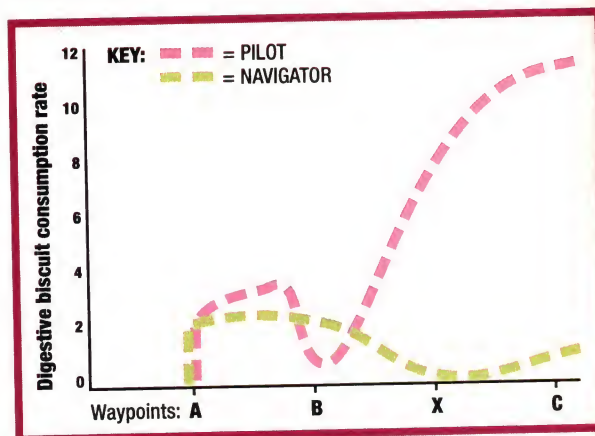
Two: an unsuccessful TIALD bombing raid

The *Tornado* pulls into the sky, the first waypoint is reached and both airmen help themselves to a couple of biscuits. Suddenly the pilot picks up a signal on his Threat display: an enemy aircraft has achieved a lock, and there are several radar-guided missiles inbound. Turning off the autopilot, he opens the *Tornado*'s manoeuvre flaps, turns on the ECM, cranks the plane into a tight turn, and begins jinking procedures, releasing chaff and flare cartridges as he goes.

Some time later, having strayed well off course during the evasive manoeuvres, the *Tornado* picks up a couple of incoming SAMs, and so the pilot has to repeat the same procedure. Once the SAMs have been disposed of, and with the plane now low on fuel and in a position well outside the ILs beam, the pilot has to pull off a fully manual landing. The lucky navigator, meanwhile, has eaten 50 biscuits (in between trips to the loo).

Charity

Something that Buffy added – and I think this is really nice of the RAF – is that once the Tupperware boxes have had their contents examined by a superior officer, all the remaining biscuits are given to children's charities. (Hmm, how nice. Ed.)



4 MISSIONS SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED ...



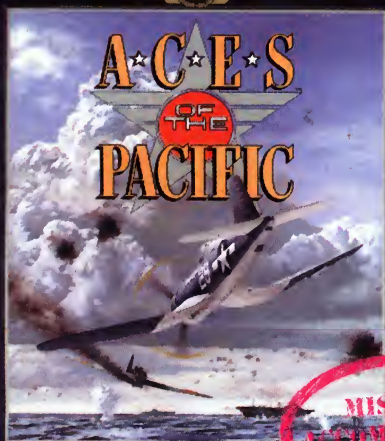
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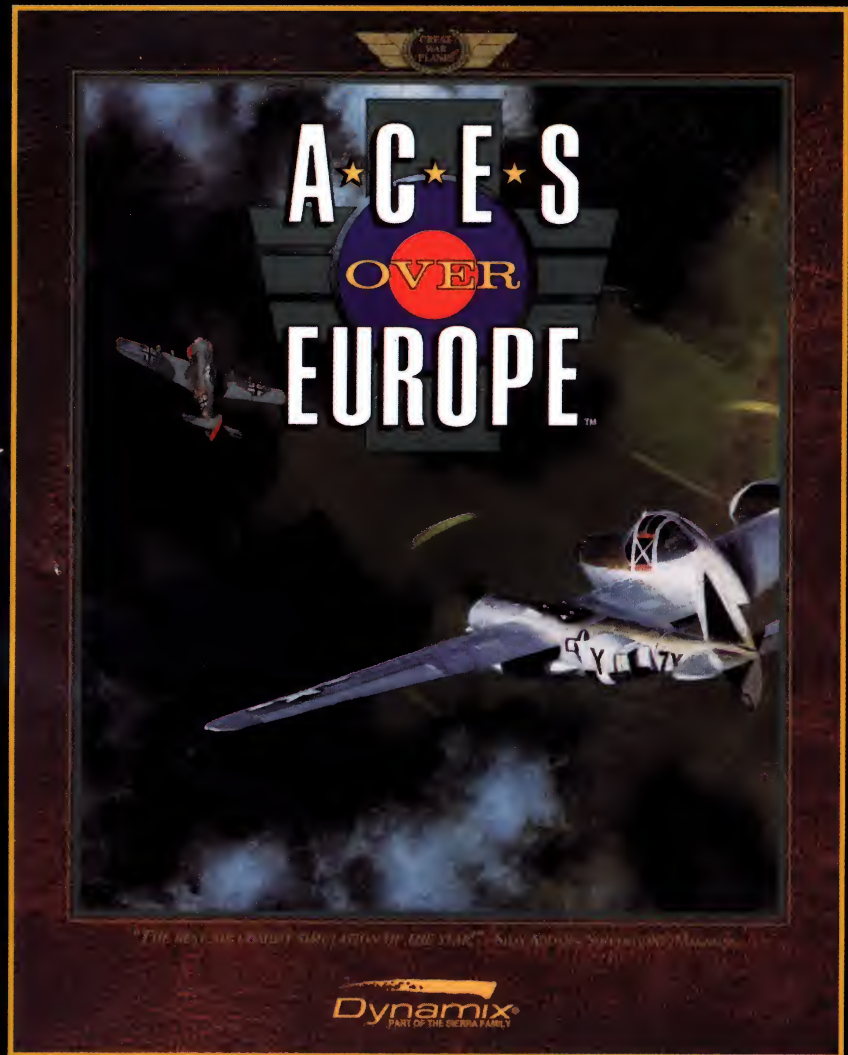
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